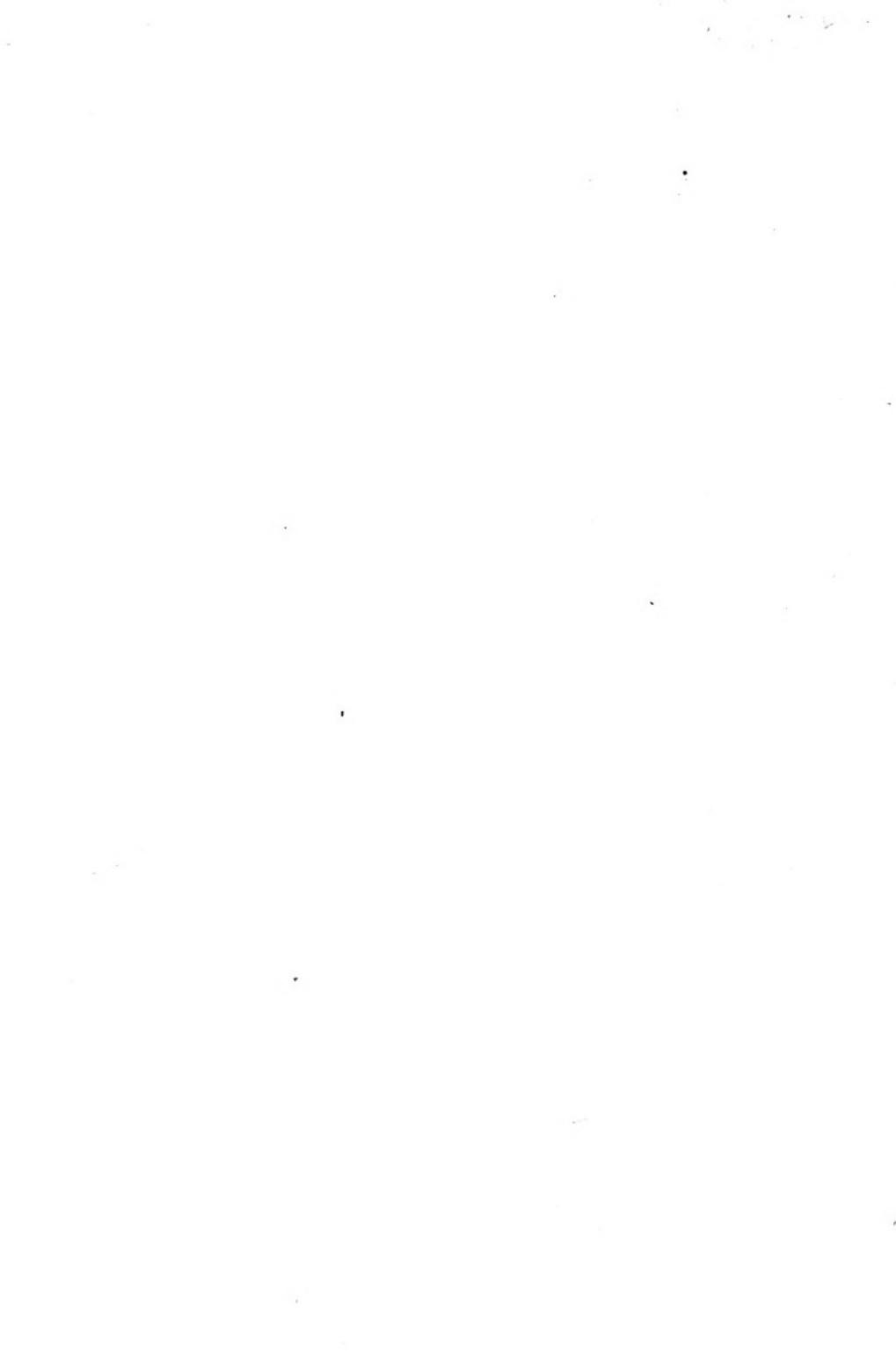
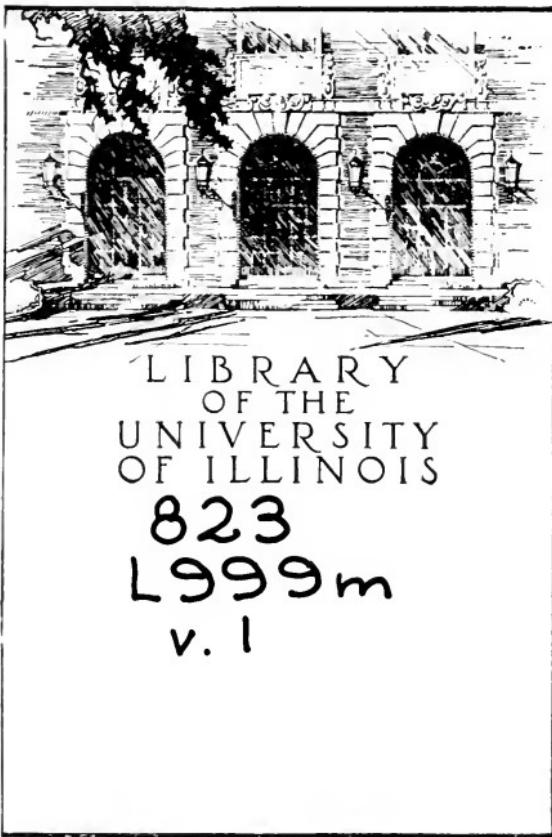
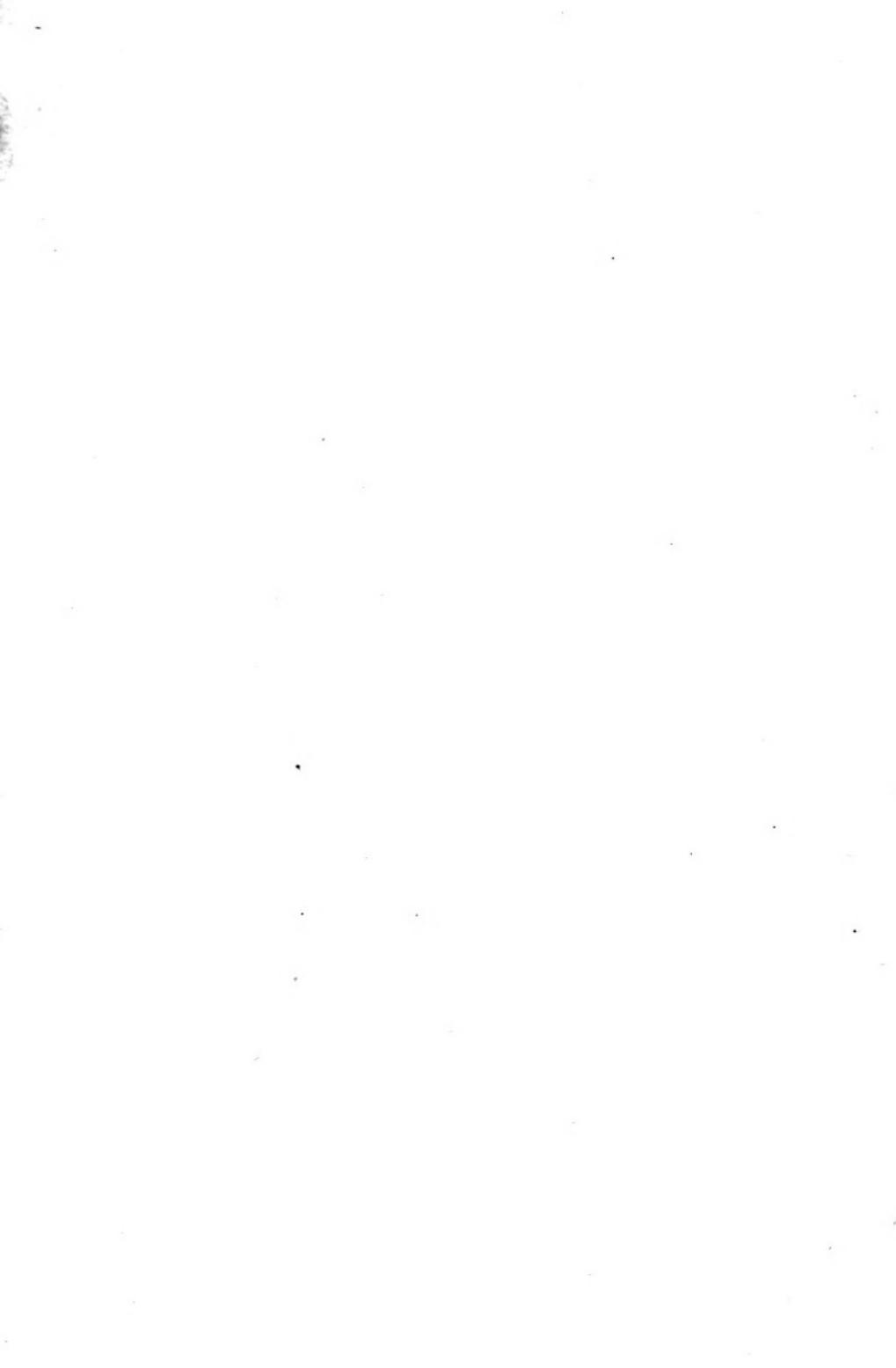


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MIRIAM SEDLEY;

OR,

THE TARES AND THE WHEAT.

A TALE OF REAL LIFE.

BY

LADY BULWER LYTTON.

Heart—Affluence in discursive talk,
From household fountains never dry ;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk ;

* * * * *
And Manhood fused with female grace,
In such a sort the child would twine
A trustful hand, unasked with thine,
And find its comfort in thy face.

ALFRED TENNYSON'S *In Memoriam*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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DÉDICACE

A LA

COMTESSE HENRIETTE D'ANGEVILLE.

Très chère, et bien digne Amie.

Voyez comme la vanité se mêle de tout dans ce monde ! même de l'amitié la plus sincère, et de la reconnaissance la plus profonde ; car je vous avoue que me voici toute glorieuse de pouvoir ainsi associer mon nom au vôtre, par l'intermédiaire d'une dédicace. Mais, comme Plutarque a bien dit dans sa Vie d'Alexandre : "Ce n'est pas toujours dans les actions les plus éclatantes que se montrent davantage les vertus, ou les vices des hommes ; une action ordinaire, une parole, un badinage, font souvent mieux connaître le caractère d'un homme, que des batailles sanglantes, des sièges et des actions mémorables."

Et moi, chère amie, je veux suivre un aussi bon exemple ; et puisque vous avez si long-temps posé

en ami modèle—c'est dans votre cœur d'or, dans votre zèle perspicace, dans votre dévouement infatigable, dans votre haute intelligence, (qui ne se voile jamais parcequ'elle est toujours éclairée par le cœur) que je veux puiser mon éloge de vous :—toute *rara avis* que vous êtes—espèce de Sévigné tramé Bayard ! car pour la correspondance vous pouvez *au pied de la lettre* prendre votre place à côté de la première, et pour le courage, et la loyauté, tenir tête au dernier de cap-à-pied, étant sans contredit à la fois, une des femmes la plus spirituelle, et *des hommes* le plus honnête que je connaisse.

Vous voyez que je ne souffle pas mot de votre ascension miraculeuse de Mont Blanc, ni de la petite poste que vous aviez établie sur la cime, écrivant et expédiant cinq lettres (je crois) par cette entreprise *non générale* ! Ni de vos triomphes et votre couronnement à Chamounix, ni même de votre magnifique Album ! tout *auréolé*, qu'il est des chefs-d'œuvres des artistes les plus célèbres de l'Europe, car tout cela appartient au monde et à la postérité ; mais *vous*, votre bonté et votre amitié, ce sont mes trésors *à moi*, et j'ai le droit de m'enorgueillir. Ce n'est pas pour dénigrer vos exploits de Mont Blanc, mais au bout du compte qu'avez-vous vu de si extraordinaire ? *Une pauvre petite Mer de Glace* ! Ah ! chère, venez y en Angleterre, et vous trouverez des familles toutes entières de glace ! Fait physiologique qui me porte à croire, que si

Socrate avait été Anglais, en priant les dieux de lui défendre de ses amis, le brave homme aurait ajouté et surtout de mes parents ! Vous vous rappellez ce que notre pauvre amie la Princesse Alexandre Galitzin disait à propos des G***** en le préfaçant de “Faut être juste, ma chère—mais—” eh bien ! vous n’avez qu’à faire l’application. Et ce n’est point étonnant, vu que l’idolâtrie du veau d’or soit notre culte national, à quelques belles et bonnes, exceptions près, la *Femelle Britannique* (animal sans cœur et sans tête, inédite par Buffon) est vraiment une nullité odieuse, et voilà pourquoi le commerce social est une chose incomprise chez nous ; car, tandis que la France a produit tant de femmes célèbres et de grandes dames,—l’Angleterre ne fait guère que *mettre bas* (et *à bas*) des *femelles* ! des femmelettes et des *fine Ladies* ! La première ne sait rien, la seconde ne fait rien, et la troisième ne dit rien ! et toute cela se suivent, comme les moutons de Panurge ; veut on s’affranchir de ces “Tartes à la crême” capacités, et pénétrer dans les côteries où l’on fait de l’esprit par métier, on ne trouve guère que des hommes pédants, et assommants ; et des femmes précieuses et sans grâce morale, ou physique. Quant au mâle, il se rétranche dans un égoïsme profond, et une apathie sublime, et entre ces deux gouffres, il traite la *femelle* ! de haut en bas, adoptant un style Sor-

bonne, et toujours faisant des expériences *in anima vili*, dans ses relations avec elle. Avouez que c'est dure, quand on a respiré cette atmosphère électrique et attrayante des beaux esprits de l'Hôtel Castellan (où on y a été même un peu incensé); et qu'on a eu ses entrées, au vrai musée de célébrités *aimables*, réunies dans les salons de Madame Récamier; oui, chère amie, et quand par-dessus le marché on a été gâté par de bonnes causeries, si intimes et si spirituelles, chez nos bonnes amies Pallard de Waldemberg, Madame C. avec ses réminiscences personnelles de Göthe et de Jean Paul; et Anna avec ses petits soins et sa bonté intarissable, qui bien sûr aurait fait la conquête de Richter s'il avait été des nôtres, en chair, et en os. Hélas! chère amie, que de crêpes ont voilé nos deux existences, depuis ces douces veillées, quand je riais de grand cœur avec vous; aujourd'hui je pleure de même, et la sympathie, croyez-le, n'en est pas moins cordiale, pour en être plus triste. Vous dites vrai, chère bonne; que ce sont les vivants qui me font la guerre,—mais—mais—c'est la mort qui a remportée la victoire! car il paraît que le ciel prend son bien partout où il le trouve—et voilà pourquoi les anges ne restent jamais longtemps sur cette terre, toute jonchée qu'elle est, de cœurs brisés, de mécomptes et de regrets!

Adieu chère et digne amie, je vous embrasse dans

vos montagnes, et quand je pense que les dites montagnes nous séparent, je suis prête à chanter avec le Fou de Tolède :

“ Ce vent qui vient à travers la montagne
Me rendra fou ! me rendra fou ! ”

Si j'étais homme, du moins, ce serait toujours *fou de vous* ! Maintenant il faut vous contenter de ma *folie bien raisonnable* de vouloir non seulement vous la répéter, mais le dire à tout le monde, que j'ai l'honneur d'être, chère *Reine de Mont Blanc* !

Vôtre toute dévouée

Et bien affectueuse amie,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

Londres, ce 31 Mars, 1851.

MIRIAM SEDLEY.

CHAPTER I.

READER, hast ever towards the close of an autumnal day, alternately cantered and strolled by the sea-shore, when the tide was out—each wave of which had, however, left its indelible impress along the crinkled sands as well as a few weeds, and shells for children to pick up, and naturalists to speculate upon ? If so, thou wilt know, that there is a sort of dreamy pleasure in marking those traces ; and, here and there, picking up a shell, or a pebble, or it may be a weed, left by that great tide.

It has been finely said of Napoleon Buonaparte,

“ That the ebb and flow of his single mind,
Were as a tide to the rest of mankind !”

Above that tide, were also many bright luminaries :

which like it, have passed away from our actual sphere to roll on like the other meteoric marvels of Omnipotence, into the great ocean of eternal light. All these have past for you as well as for me ; but they have left their indelible traces on the world ; for great minds are the landmarks of Time. Come, then, reader with me, if you have an idle hour at your disposal, and I will show you a few of the shells, and weeds I have picked up, “en laissant trotter la plume et lui abandonnant la bride sur le cou ;” as Bossuet said of Madame de Sévigné ; whom for your sake, to say nothing of my own, I regret I am not ! When Cato at eighty-six, was for the forty-fourth time cited to appear before the Tribunal of the Roman People, he exclaimed, “ how difficult it is to give an account of one’s life to those who are not of our own area ! ” It is true, I am not quite eighty-six ; neither, thank heaven ! have I been before the public forty-four times ; still there are difficulties in the matter, first because, though this is an autobiography, and consequently I, it is nevertheless not Me ; and next, because there is nothing new under the sun, so that “ non dicuntur nova, sed novè ,” is all one can aspire to, unless to be sincere in one’s opinions, and fearless in expressing them, from the rarity of the thing may pass for a novelty ; so to begin at the beginning.

It was a dark and stormy night at the end of August. The wind was sending forth those mysterious wailings, which are alternately like the low, hollow moan of sup-

pressed suffering, and the loud frantic shriek of insanity which the lower orders of Irish conscientiously believe to be the howling of the Banshee. The rain was pattering against the casement panes, which the hurricane was shaking in their leaden lozenge-shaped frames, and I and my sister Grace were fast asleep, in our little cots, which stood beside each other, in the nursery at Castle Sedley ; for so was the home of my fathers still called, though it was, at the time I allude to, nothing more than a long straggling pile of white, or rather of grey building, standing upon an eminence, on that wildest and most romantic of all coasts, the western coast of Ireland ; but “once upon a time” when kings were the indigenous production of the Hibernian hedges, as blackberries are now. It had been a castle, and therefore according to that peculiarly Irish custom of giving the finest possible names even to the meanest and shabbiest things, notwithstanding the unchecked delapidations of time, it still retained its grandiloquent name of castle, though all that remained of its architectural honours to entitle it to the appellation, was one solitary turret, in which was situated the nursery aforesaid ; and, as it overlooked the sea, poor Grace and I did not fail to be threatened with mermaids and syrens, ever on the watch to take us away, if we were naughty, or as Nelly, our Irish nurse more tersely expressed it, “if we’d be bould.”

The entrance-hall at Castle Sedley, was still paved

with grey marble, but broken and indented in several places, and guiltless of oil-cloth ; though *en revanche*, a strip of Dutch matting traversed it diagonally ; while around its walls were hung the colossal horns of the Irish elk. And upon a huge granite slab, which looked more like a Druidical altar than a table, lay a stringless Irish harp, purporting, by a parchment legend attached to it, to have belonged to the last of the bards, the celebrated Carolan ; while above this table was a large, but frameless picture, portraying the scene at Lord Mayo's in which Carolan triumphed over the musical skill of the Italian Geminiani.*

On the right hand side of this entrance was a large barrack of a room, still dignified with the high sounding appellation of the Banqueting Hall, though in sooth it now boasted no higher condiments, nor more luxurious

* The story is as follows : Carolan, an Irish bard, born at Roscommon in 1670, was, in the beginning of the last century attached to the household of Lord Mayo, who brought from Dublin a celebrated Italian performer. Carolan, who till then, had been much courted and applauded for his musical skill, now found himself greatly neglected, and complained of it one day in the presence of his Italian rival. "When you can play in as masterly a manner as he does," said Lord Mayo, "I promise you, you shall not be overlooked." Carolan upon this, wagered with Geminiani, that although nearly a total stranger to Italian music, yet he would follow him in any piece that he played, and that he would himself after play a voluntary in which the Italian should *not* follow him. The proposal was acceded to, and Carolan, to the no small discomfiture of Geminiani, was eminently successful in both wagers.

tokens of good cheer, than the innumerable carrots, onions and dried herbs, that strewed its floor for winter consumption, while ripston pippins, quinces, Chaumontelle pears, as the aristocracy of the kitchen garden occupied the Dais, and sent (as I well remember) their conflicting and anything but agreeable odours in contraband whiffs across the hall, on the left-hand side of which was the dining room, with its coarse scarlet moreen curtains, trimmed with black velvet, and black velvet plague spots, bursting out about the draperies, according to the prevailing epidemic among dining-room curtains at the period, (1812) when the war was raging not only between France and England, but against everything like good taste both in dress and furniture.

Down the centre of the room rolled a long dark mahogany horse-shoe table, which stretched forth its dinginess like an arm of the Black Sea; for French polish was unknown in those days, and the green-baize, bees'-wax, and cork frictions, bestowed every morning by Maurice, the butler, and his colleagues, were neutralized by the stains of claret and punch shed upon it every night. Round this table were a set of *ci-devant* red morocco chairs; but which now looked like a detachment of the 24th Foot (for such was their number,) marching into country quarters, after a protracted campaign on active service, so tattered, and deplorable was their condition, and so dimmed their once scarlet glory.

At the end of the room, in an alcove, supported by alternated pillars, for this room had been modernized according to the most approved bad taste of the time, stood a long narrow isthmus of a mahogany side-board, connecting the peninsula of two more red morocco chairs ; and at either end of this piece of furniture were two colossal mahogany tea urns, doubtless intended by the upholsterer as ornaments ; but if so, shamefully frustrating his intentions. The legs of this mahogany nightmare were so thin and fragile, as to look quite incapable of supporting so unwieldy a super-structure ; for, like all the furniture legs of that period, whether of tables, chairs, or piano-fortes, they seemed to have been “taken at a valuation” from the Spiders’ Company “retiring from business,” on their own account.

Over the mantel-piece, which was of a plain, ugly, and much veined piece of white marble, too high for modern fashion, and not high enough for that of the olden time, was a picture of my father going to cover, on his favourite hunter, Dare-Devil, with Angus Troil, the huntsman, a *boy* of sixty-three, and all the pack round him on the lawn before Castle Sedley, in the very kitchen of which, unfortunately for me, the claret still flowed as of old, though at that time, in most Irish houses, it had given place to water, or at least to strong waters.

I remember little of my father, except that he was old-looking for so very young a man ; for he was not

then more than nine and twenty. I was too young to remark, or rather to wonder, why his hand trembled so violently of a morning ; for I *did* remark it, or I should not now recollect it so vividly ; but all I felt then was, that for the few brief moments I ever saw him daily, that hand was laid kindly on my head, and therefore I thought I belonged to it, and it to me, and so I loved it ; for, having lost my poor mother a year after I was born, I had never known that affection for which every heart, but especially every childish heart, yearns. Although my mother's two sisters lived with my father, ostensibly to take care of Grace and me, yet as the first in command of these two aunts, Mrs. Marley, a young widow without children, evinced a decided preference for Grace, I soon became that most miserable of created beings, the neglected sister of a favourite and favoured child ; not that I envied Grace for being loved, indulged, and privileged on all occasions, for it was impossible not to love one so gentle, so gifted, and so good.

I thought it was a matter of course that every one must do so ; I only wished that my aunt Marley could have given Grace all her love, without disliking me ; for I *felt* that she *did* dislike me, even more than I perceived it ; yet still, each night and morning, when I went to give her my kiss of greeting, or of parting, my heart fluttered in the hope that hers would be less cold—less got over as a matter of course. Yes, day after day, I hoped all this, and day after day I was

disappointed ; for, from first to last, life is Fate's game of Blind Man's Buff, in which it is Hope that places the bandage ; and for those she favours, she arranges it so that they may, in some sort, see their way ; while others she blinds so completely, that in vain they grope, strive, and exert all their skill, still they can clutch nothing but empty air, and to the end everything escapes them. I was of the latter class.

My aunt had the misfortune of being a perfect beauty ; I say the misfortune, for it is indeed a "fatal gift," more or less, to all women, especially to those who, like my aunt Marley, had not had the advantages of good early moral training, (which few had in those days, especially in Ireland,) to act as an effectual defence against the treacherous adulation of men, and the still more treacherous envy of women. To add to my aunt's misfortunes, she was naturally a superior-minded person, but her talents were totally without cultivation, or right direction, and, alas ! it is in the human, as in the horticultural parterre, the more luxuriant the flowers, the ranker the weeds—when to such they are suffered to run. Weak minds, and negative characters, however much neglected, never can incur the same dangers themselves, or occasion them to others, that perverted energies, and unpruned passions do.

Self-knowledge is a science, which being not only the root, but the most difficult of all sciences, cannot

be too early taught; for self-knowledge is self-government. And that which, in a well-regulated mind, is an admirable strength of character, in a neglected one, is brutish obstinacy. The penetration, and natural shrewdness, which under proper culture, would have been fined into a nice and analytic discrimination of the qualities and peculiarities of others, in its natural and unrestrained luxuriance, becomes a coarse and impatient intolerance of their faults, which only confirms, instead of correcting them just as violence and impetuosity rivet the knots in a skein of silk, instead of disentangling them, as patience and gentleness might. But worse, perhaps, than all these, in their fatal effects, are the moral and physiological portions of our organization, when neglected, or misdirected; those more subtle feelings and sympathies, which form, as it were, the gamut of our nature, and which, when skilfully handled, may be attuned to such fine harmonies—jarred upon by ignorant teaching, ever become the fearful discords of ungovernable tempers.

God made the world out of chaos. Each mind is but a type of the universe. All the elements for a great and harmonious whole are there; but it requires the will of a Creator first, to separate, and then to bind each, by immutable laws, in the fair circle of federate order; but, when no creative fiat has passed over this mental chaos, it wars, painfully and impotently, against itself, while its powerful, but dark and

unwrought masses, crush, or mutilate all those with whom they come in contact.

The “abstract, and brief chronicle” of my poor mother’s marriage, as I learned, in after life, was as follows :—When only sixteen, she had met my father, a lad of nineteen, at some races, at his uncle’s, Lord Lutron’s; and my father falling desperately in love with her, proposed for her, at the race-ball that followed, on the same evening; and this being the first ball she had ever been at, or, indeed, the first evening she had ever passed from home, she was, if not flattered, at least fluttered, by the offer. Still she did not immediately accept it, but stammered out something about not knowing whether “mamma would let her.” But during the drive home, having proclaimed her conquest to her sisters, Mrs. Marley and Miss Bell Paulett, the eldest of the three, they strongly urged her not to hesitate about accepting young Sedley, whose fortunes, like all Irish fortunes, was reputed to be much larger than it really was. But my grandmother, when consulted, though an exceedingly weak woman in other respects, for, indeed, she was wearing weeds for her *third* husband, and lived to be guilty of a fourth, had sufficient common sense to perceive how terrible a risk her daughter would run, in marrying at her age a boy of nineteen, whom she had only seen once; who had been the spoilt, because the only son of a foolish and widowed mother, and who was, moreover, the ward of his very designing uncle,

Lord Lutron, who had also been guardian to another nephew, whom he had defrauded of a considerable portion of his property, and was trying to do the same with my father (in which he eventually but too well succeeded), and whom he moulded to his purposes by an unlimited supply of ready money, claret, and fox-hunting.

My grandmother, after remonstrating in vain with my mother, who was out-bullied by her sisters, whom my father had promised should live at Castle Sedley, with their sister Miriam, if she would marry him—my grandmother, I say, in this dilemma, wrote to her brother-in-law, Sir George Paulett, requesting his advice and assistance. As Sir George then happened to be Secretary-at-War in Ireland, and had before befriended his sister-in-law, by taking his nephew—her youngest son by her first marriage with her brother—Warburton Paulett, and educating him at Westminster, or rather *trying* to do so, for Charles Paulett was a wild, hair-brained spendthrift, who as yet had never been distinguished but for two things—the first of which was, running away from school, in a post-chaise and four, the bill of which, with that of the hotel at Richmond, whither he had thought fit to retire, he enclosed to his tutor, requesting he might add it to the other accounts when he forwarded them to his uncle; and the next was, his having appeared at the battle of Alexandria (where he was his uncle's aid-de camp), with a red silk pocket-

handkerchief rolled round his head, having left his only cocked hat in pawn with a crocodile, on the eve of the battle, by which demi-turbaned *coiffure*, he was mistaken for a renegade Turk, and fared rather worse in the enemy's hands on that account, than he would have otherwise done.

Sir George, who was the kindest and most actively benevolent of created beings, not only wrote back a most charming answer to my grandmother (by the Grace of her third husband, then bearing the name of Mrs. D'Estere;) but also wrote an affectionate and truly paternal letter to my mother, using all his powers of entreaty, which were neither few nor weak, to dissuade her from so rash a marriage. My mother was greatly touched by the genuine and cordial affection of this letter, which went on to say, that she had not even the excuse of a romantic girlish first love for young Sedley, that she had seen nothing of the world, and, therefore, could know nothing of her own mind, or even of her own taste; that the following year he should be returning to London, and should feel great pride in placing his three beautiful nieces at the head of his bachelor establishment, and giving them the advantages of the best society, where they might certainly marry much better than they could hope to do in their present seclusion."

This letter said many more things, equally true and equally kind; and though Mrs. Marley was greatly caught by its eloquence, she was little moved by its

wisdom, especially as next year seemed an eternity to her and her sister Bell, who longed to emancipate themselves from the maternal roof, which Mrs. Marley, though a widow, could not do, having been left almost penniless ; and her sister Bell was more than ever eager to change the scene, as within the last four months a certain Mr. Fitzackerly had appeared in the offing. At first it was not clear which of the widows—my grandmother or my aunt, Marley—he was giving chase to, but soon, by the rather frequent supper parties, it was evident that it was the former three-decker he had spoken with. Now these odious hot suppers, and the still more odious hot punch that succeeded them, at Mr. Fitzackerly's especial request, were peculiarly obnoxious to Mrs. Marley, who, from being unfortunately deeply imbued with the pernicious fallacies of the French Revolution (which had then more or less seared their trace through Europe), and who was besides strongly tainted by the corresponding poison of Mrs. Wolstonecraft's book, considered herself a synopsis of all past, present, and future philosophy, and in every respect a luminary in advance of the age ; consequently such inferior beings as Mr. Phelem Fitzackerly and the rest of the *Buckeens*, of Clanfuddle, (the country town wherein Mrs. D'Estere resided) were naturally the favourite aversions of Mrs. Marley ; while Miss Bell Paulett, with juster cause, disliked the prospect of the spurious control of a *diable à quatre* step-father.

Now, but for the long-way-off vista of another year, there could be no doubt that their kind uncle, Sir George's proposition was in every way the most eligible, the most agreeable, and the most advantageous ; but, on the other hand, my father offered immediate possession of Castle Sedley ; and to the young, who can afford to wait, the present is everything ; while the old, with a degree of childish inconsiderateness that they ought to be beyond, are ever farming out on building leases a future that don't belong to them. Such being the case, my father and Castle Sedley won the day against London and Sir George Paulett. My mother, it is true, urged that it was acting ungratefully by their good uncle ; but she was soon talked down by her sisters ; Bell calling her an *idjet* (Anglice idiot), and Marcia (Mrs. Marley) telling her that she was too unenlightened to be a judge in this matter, and that marriage was a great social error, a Bœotian mistake, —(if so, it is the very worst of all mistakes, as there is no remedy for it)—but as, in the present barbarous state of civilization, husbands were the necessary consequence of this fatal error, young Sedley would do as well for a tyrant as any other fool.

Strange to say, my poor mother, I have heard, did not seem much seduced by this little statistical tableau of my aunt Marley's. Nevertheless, after two days of incessant door slammnig, flushed cheeks, and high words between the two elder sisters, she yielded to their superior force, and became Mrs. Sedley. It is

needless, perhaps, after this to state that this ill-assorted marriage was none of the happiest, and the eternal pitched battles between Bell and Marcia plunged my poor mother into despair, and drove my father out of the house, and more than ever into the trammels of Lord Lutron. At length, pitying Heaven removed my poor mother to its more congenial sphere, at the same moment that relentless Fate inflicted upon her Grace, and myself, her first and heaviest blow. For a child without a mother is—

“A boat at midnight sent alone
To drift upon a stormy sea.”

For the first week after this sad event, the house was still, with the cold, terrible, aching stillness of death ; save that my aunts' grief was as violent as their tempers, so that their sobs amounted at times to shrieks,—they nearly hugged poor Grace and me to death, and declared over and over again, that they would sacrifice their lives to us. The word sacrifice was very apposite, only there was a slight grammatical error in the construction of the phrase :—it should have been transposed. For three whole months, all was halcyon calm, and as nothing draws people together like a common misfortune, for that space of time, after my dear mother's death, my father was “*l'enfant chéri de ces dames*” but alas !—

“All that's sweet was made,
But to be lost when sweetest !”

And this was precisely the case with my aunts' tempers, which having about this time reached their hydromelic culminating point, I am truly sorry to say they again began to lose them. The scenes that now ensued were terrific. My father spent the whole day out, either with the hounds or with that other fox, his uncle, and, alas ! on no single night, or rather morning, did he by any accident go sober to bed. This deplorable vice, begun so early in life, the vehement upbraidings of my aunt Marley, and the coarse and publicly expressed invectives of my aunt Bell, confirmed into an incurable habit. The former he had nick-named the Goddess of Reason, and the latter the Duchess ; and when they began (which they did even before the servants) taunting him with his disgusting, beastly habits, he replied with a laugh :— “That’s all to your advantage, my dears ; for any man in his *sober* senses would turn you out of the house before he’d submit to your tempers.” To which his cousin, Tom Lutron, would politely add, when present at these *mélées* :

“ And why don’t you do so, Godfrey ? — d——l take ‘em.”

“ No, no, my dear Tom, he won’t ; the d——l knows better what he’s about, than to make his dominions too hot, or he’d get no one to stay there.” Such would be my father’s rejoinder, whereat my aunts would exit at separate doors, and a cannonading of slamming (which the servants termed a field day),

would shake the whole house for three hours after. My aunt Bell had erected me into an idol, in opposition to her sister, with whose taste on any point hers seldom coincided. But this partiality availed me little ; as, in consideration of her matrimonial honours, my aunt Marley was first in command ; so that early in life I learned one of its bitterest lessons, that of the passiveness, and powerlessness of friendship,—compared with the zeal and potent sway of enmity !

Often was I the innocent cause of strife between the sisters, through my childish restlessness, or importunities ; when the younger would be stretched upon one sofa deep in the perusal of some French or German philosophical work, that had reached her translated, *via* London ; while the elder reclining upon another couch, was dropping a silent tear on the delicate distresses of some Minerva Press Heroine, I, who having in vain, by means of paper and pins, and the back of my spelling-book for a drawing-board, tried to lithograph one of the large green geranium leaves that stood boldly out on the light yellow-grounded chintz of the drawing-room curtains, and as vainly tried to seduce the ever good and obedient Grace from her book, or work, into making a noise, would then proceed, slate in hand, and kneeling down before one of the high, hard, gilt and painted cane-bottomed arm-chairs, would make a daring attempt to copy some of the wreaths of very scarlatina roses, and cholera morbus looking forget-me-nots, that meandered along the back of it.

But, being no genius, I only succeeded in making a most atrocious squeaking of the pencil against the slate, which would so irritate my aunt Marley's philosophical nerves, that I generally received, previously to any milder order to desist, a box on the ear from her, that not only sent me measuring my length upon the floor, (and if the evil had extended no further it would have been of little consequence), but which also set me roaring in a manner that must have given a convincing proof, had any such been wanted,—which indeed I don't think it was—that the lungs of the Sedleys (always so celebrated) had not degenerated. Then would my aunt Bell, hastily deserting "*The Humane Assassin*," or "*The Innocent Highwayman*," or whatever other equally delightful and instructive fiction she was engrossed in, fly to the rescue, exclaiming :

" You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Mrs. Marley, with your philosophy, and your nonsense, to treat the poor darling child so : Come here, Miriam, my darling, and aunt Bell will give her a peach ; come ; and we'll go to the hot-house for it."

But at these offers of pacification I only screamed the louder, and rushed unappeasably out of the room, as I had seen Bell herself do, under similar aggravating offers of atonement on the part of my aunt Marley, or my father ; and if in my flight I chanced to fall in with the latter, he'd catch me up in his arms, muttering an oath against my aunts, and say, " What's the

matter, Mirry, my darling ? what have they been teasing papa's fairy about ? which is it—the Goddess of Reason, or the Duchess ?—deuce take them !”

And when as soon as I could speak from the big stag-like tears rolling like a cataract into my mouth, I had sobbed out an explanation of the affray, he would judiciously tell me not to mind them, but run back and just put my head in at the drawing-room door, and say :

“ Ah ! I don’t care for you, for papa is going to take me out to ride before him on Dare-Devil ; and he says, I shall set up all night if I like, and have as much cake as I can eat !”

Such was the auspicious commencement of my education ;—but it is high time that I should return to the eventful night of the 13th of October, 1812.

CHAPTER II.

WELL, as I before said, it was a terrific night, and the storm threatened, and the owl hooted, and the old walls rocked at Castle Sedley, when Mary Caisy was still trying to wake Grace, who slept more soundly than her volatile sister, whom Nelly had just succeeded in awakening.

"Get up alannah ! there's a darlint now ; get up for her own Nelly Bawn ?"

"No, no," said I, rubbing my eyes, and yawning, but far too sleepy to cry. "No, Mirry *won't* get up, for papa said I should not get up to breakfast if I did not like."

"It's not *breaquist*, mavourneen," rejoined Nelly.

"What then ! is it supper ?" said I, now actually opening my eyes at the idea of the forbidden pleasure.

"Sup sorrow, I'm thinking," muttered Nelly, wiping the corner of her eyes with her apron.

"Where are we going?" asked poor Grace mildly, as with her usual docility she was submitting to being dressed.

"Whisht!" cried Nelly, turning sharply round, for I was her favourite, and like all persons addicted to favourites, she could not do without a counterbalancing victim—and Grace served her for that purpose—especially whenever Nelly was in grief—a weakness that she always concealed under an assumed asperity of temper. "Whisht there, Miss Grace, childer is to do as they're bid, and not to be tazing a body inside out wid questions; the mistress says yer to go, and that's enough."

"But go where?" asked I authoritatively, being now thoroughly awake; "tell me, Nelly, for I *won't* get up till you do."

"Sorrow a know I know—where it is yer going, maeouchelagh."

"Well, then I *won't* be dressed;" and I suited the action to the word, by kicking Nelly away, who was trying to put on my shoes; but, nothing offended beyond a sharp "be quiet, Miss," to poor Grace, who was neither speaking, nor moving, nor even struggling, she returned to the charge.

"Now, look at here, darlint, see, its yer fine red shoes that yer so fond of, yer fine red cherry shoes, that as Dermot says you'd entice the birds off the threes

wid, and sure you won't refuse to put *thim* on, anyhow?"

"But I *will* refuse though, and I don't care for my red shoes, nor for Dermot, nor for you either, for you know very well where we're going, and you won't tell me; and I'll go to grandmama Fitzackerly's to-morrow, and I'll have Catty O'Brien for my nurse, that's what I'll do;" and then knowing that my tears were irresistible to Nelly, I perorated this piece of oratory with a violent flood of them.

"Whisht now! there's a pet,—my soul to glory, if I know where yer going, but I b'lave it's to the Ginral's,—that's to Sur George Paulett's;—long life to him, for he's the rale gintleman, and spoke up agin the Union as loud as Grattan himself; and it's Dermot that knows all his printed spaches by heart, and has thim pasted all over the cabin; and thrue for him, as he says, now that poor Ould Ireland is gone to the wall, so should the best of good spaches that tried to difind her. All I know is—stay now, give me yer fut, there's a darlint—Master Charless arrived in a big ship two hours ago,—a yochte (yacht,) they do be calling it; and the wind roaring, and the say raging, and he wet to the skhin, by raison of the open boat he was obleeged to come ashooore in. Fust, he axes for the masther? but hearing that he was gone to the Lord's, 'All right,' says he; and then making but won bound of the fust flight of stairs, he pops his head in at the drawing-room dure; (this Morrish tould me, who was

sarving the tay there. So don't go and tell it on me agin, Miss Miriam, alannah ;) and says he, as soon as he put his head into the room where the Misthuss and Miss Bell was at tay : 'I'm your man,' says he. 'In the name of wonder, Charless,' says they, 'is that you?' 'Don't yez see it is,' says he : though I don't wonder at they're not knowing him at fust, for Masther Charless stands so far behind his nose, that it's like a shade to him, and seranes him from observation for a while. Well thin, it sames he ups and tells 'em that he was come to take 'em all on a visit to Sur George's, who was now living in some beautiful place, in the Medetation Say, (Morrish called it,) wherever that is. And och ! murther, the confusion iver since Masther Charless has been in it. The ordering here, and the scraching there ; Miss Bell blazing away like a kitchen chimney a-fire, or as the Masther says, and threue for him, like a barrel of gunpowder, stirred wid a red-hot poker ; and the Misthuss telling us we all are unlighted brutes and fools, and I the most unlighted of any of them. 'May be so, Ma'am,' says I, 'but I don't wish, plase God, to be lighted any more nor I am, aither in this world nor the next.' And now get up, honey, for I've toult ye all I know, and endade (only the thruth's not fit to be spoke at all times) a thrifle more. Och ? bad luck to ye for bells ! there they ara again tearing the lungs out of the metal, as if it was for the devil's wedden ;— they were ringing ! and who knows, maybe it's Miss Paulett ! that's going to be married all in hurry at last."

I now required no further entreaties to get up. The idea that I should at length behold my grand-uncle, Paulett, of whom I had heard so much, and whose picture I had thought the most wonderful thing in the world, as it hung and covered one side of my grandmother's dining-room, representing Sir George—a very handsome and aristocratic looking man—writing a despatch upon a cannon ; while a little Arab boy was holding his horse, and a brilliant *état-major* occupied the background.

" But papa is going, too ?" asked I, so suddenly raising my head, that I gave my forehead a violent blow against the brush with which Nelly was brushing my hair. Poor Nelly ! whenever it was not convenient to her to answer a question specifically, she always grew cross ;—so now almost shaking me, she said :

" Whist ! now, Miss Miriam, you do be axing too many questions entirely ; there down wid you and say your prayers, for it's prayers I'm thinking that is naded, when papple does be going timpting the say such a night as this."

" Well, but," said I, determined to try and satisfy myself upon another point before I said my prayers, that I might the better know what to ask or to thank God for, as I invariably did (thanks to poor Nelly's, in that respect, right tuition) for every childish happiness that befell me ; " tell me, Pomba's going, isn't he ? for I won't go without him."

Pomba was a Spanish pointer, which had been sent

to my father from Spain by my uncle Charles, (the hero of the red pocket-handkerchief at the battle of Alexandria, and who had now come to take us to Sir George Paulett's,) and Pomba being the first friend I ever had among his incomparable race, I ought to have mentioned him before.

"So he is coming, too, isn't he?" persisted I.

"Av coarse," replied Nelly, "what would the poor baste do, and you no longer in it, but howl himself to an echo just."

Re-assured on this head, I knelt down, and said my prayers; thanking Heaven most devoutly, for letting me go to my grand-uncle Paulett's; and concluding my orisons as I always did, with "And pray God do—do bless papa!"

"And the Lord be wid him," added Nelly, solemnly.

After we had said our prayers, it was always Nelly's custom to make us kiss each other; so, now throwing my arms round Grace's neck, I said :

"Oh, Grace! don't you love grand-uncle Paulett?"

"No," replied Grace, calmly, "for I don't know him."

"But every one loves him who knows him, Grace; so you ought to love him."

"Well, perhaps I shall, when I *do* know him," said she.

Even I, unreasonable as I was in all things, could not exact more, and so I remained silent for about a

minute ; I mention this circumstance, merely because it was not one that often occurred.

There we stood for the last time under our father's roof—at ten and eight—the perfect type of what we should be at seventeen and fifteen ; or at seventy and fifty, were it God's will that we should live so long :—Grace ever calm, dispassionate, and just ; never giving her love without cause, never disliking without reason, but never allowing dislike to amount to hatred ; and girding herself like a panoply, against all danger, with the prudence of submission : whilst I, on the contrary, was a sort of whirlwind, woofed with a will-o'-the-wisp ! ever loving and hating, out of hand ; wedding myself in haste to every impression, and, as is the natural result of so doing, repenting at leisure ; writhing under the least sense of injustice so bitterly, and quite as much for others as for myself, that I must expose and avenge it, though perdition were staring me in the face, as the reward of my Quixotism. In a word, though they were not then discovered for general use, all my sensations, feelings, and impressions, were communicated to me by electric telegraph ; or, as my dear good uncle, Sir George, used continually to say : “I hate your tortoise-brained people as much as any one ; but hang it, Mirry, *you* always arrive at your journey's end the day before you set out !”

“ Och, moucha ! but it sames mighty like robbing .

a house to me, packing up the alls at this time o'night, and the masther from home."

At this soliloquy of Nelly's, I turned round, and saw that after having hay-stacked Grace's and my clothes into a trunk, she had spread a shawl upon the floor, and was throwing all our books and toys into it, pell mell.

"Oh, Nelly!" cried I, rushing forward in the vain endeavour to persuade her that a cart-wheel going over it would endanger the nose of my wax doll.

"Never fare, allanah," said she, still persisting in her Juggernaut operations, without the least consideration for my effigeic, maternal feelings, "never fare; sure if it was the greatest lady in the land—the Lady Liftinant herself—she'd be liable to lose something on a journey; and if Miss Wapsey (the romantic cognomen of my doll) does lose her nose itself, sure it's better, mavourneen, that it should be by your own cart-wheel, that she knows, and that she's druv (driven) out in so often, than have it blow'd off maybe in this Meditation Say,—bad luck to it for a say, wherever it is."

"Oh! if you please Nelly give me that!" said Grace, stretching out her hand, for the second volume of the "Parent's Assistant," which our remorseless nursery Nemesis was about to cram into the jaws of a very respectable middle-sized alligator, that my uncle Charles had had stuffed, and brought home, for our especial edification.

"Oh but you do be muddling your brains wid de
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larning, Miss Grace ; said Nelly flinging it to her, in her usual ungracious manner. Here the nursery-bell began pealing, with a fifty fury power that at once proclaimed the practised hand of my aunt Paulett.

“ Och, bad manners to you, Miss Bell Paulett,” but you’d bother the patience off of a monumint.”

“ Tare an agers, Nelly woman, be quick,” said Maurice putting his head in at the door, “ for the Carge is all packed, and Masther Charless says the tide won’t serve, if ther not down by the wather side in half an hour.”

“ Och ! murder ! listen to de night !” said Nelly, completing her arrangements by tightening the knots of the shawl with an energy that nearly caused her to burst a blood-vessel, previously to snatching her black silk bonnet from a neighbouring peg, and letting it light upon her head like a crow’s nest.

“ Whew !” cried Maurice drawing a long whistle as he jerked the bundle upon his back, and lifted up the trunk in his right hand. “ Whew ! summer brazes, Nelly, summer brazes. Miss Bell bangs the storm to tathers ; I tell you the thunder’s a fool to her, and they say a mere boul of new milk, that falls aslape over its foaming ; so you’d better make haste.”

We all four hurried down the nursery-stairs, preceded by Mary Caisey, who acted as *avant-courier* to announce to my aunts that we were “ coming.” On arriving at the corridor where the bed-rooms were situated, Nelly burst into one convulsive howl, but

suddenly checking herself, she told Maurice to go and deposit his burdens in, or on the carriage ; and to say that the young ladies was riddy, and would be down immagety. Then, taking one of each of our hands in hers, she ran, or rather flew, along the passage ; dragging us after her, till she came to the door of my father's bed-room, which was quite at the end of it, and seizing a lamp that burned all night on a bracket outside, she flung open the door. The room being very large, and now without a fire, was cold and desolate ; and the feeble rays of the lamp not being enough to make the objects around distinctly visible, fell obliquely upon the old bugle tapestry curtains of the bed, which stood in an alcove at the far end of the room, and whose uncertain glitter now conjured up the most horrible visions to my superstitious fears. I clung to Nelly and buried my face in her shawl.

"Come on, me darlints," said she, again hurrying us forward.

"Oh, but it's not the mermaid's cave, is it ?" cried I, still hanging back. "I'll be good, indeed I will, Nelly ; only take me out of this."

"Mermaid's cave, what would make ye think that, mavourneen ; no, it's only the masther's bed, and I thought the laste they might let yez do, was to lave him a mouthful of prayers afoore ye went."

And so saying she lifted me up, carried me to the side of the bed, which I now perceived it really was,

and no cave, as she laid down the lamp upon the table beside it.

"But isn't papa coming with us, then?—poor papa, he shall come."

"There you are wid yer questions again, Miss Miriam. Knale down there both of yez, and say won prayer for the masther just."

"But if papa," began Grace—

"Whisht! say your prayers, Missh, and mind God never listens to the prayers of childer that do be axing questions."

"Then what's the use of our asking him to bless papa?" said Grace.

"Och, becase there's no question, but he'll attind to that; but yer larning, I'm thinking, is making you mighty pert, Miss Sedley."

We knelt down, and repeated word for word the prayer dictated by Nelly, that God would "bless, comfort, and *purfect* our father," and I have no doubt with what she considered "good emphasis and discretion," that is, in a brogue as rich, if not as sonorous as her own. In rising, I kissed the pillow, saying as I patted it, as if it had been Pomba herself: "There, poor papa, there's a kiss for you,—and you'll come soon, won't you?"

"What nonsense, Mirry," said Grace, "papa won't know that you've kissed the pillow."

This truism procured her left shoulder rather a

rough shaking from Nelly, who, having the tears now streaming down her cheeks, was getting very cross indeed.

"Oh ! den faix, Missh Grace, if you never do good, or do right, in this world ; but when it will be known and praished for, I'm thinking it's little good ye'll be afther doing, and that little itself by raison of the motive you put in it to be praished up and thanked, ye'd better lave alone, for thims not the kind of good dades that St. Pether (glory be to his sowl this night) takes the throuble of opening the gates of Hiven for." And here Nelly crossed herself devoutly, and Maurice's voice being now heard above the storm, loudly calling upon her to bring us down stairs, she hurried forward, carrying the flickering lamp in her right-hand, while she dragged me along with the other, telling Grace to "run for her life," *anglice*—to make haste.

The hall presented a sort of graphic tableau of the Tower of Babel. My aunt Bell—thundering and lightning all the servants, as Nelly expressed it—my aunt Marley wringing her hands, and turning up her eyes at the gross ignorance by which she was surrounded, and which could not perceive how much it would be to its advantage to be guided by "an unerring mind like hers !" The modest expression was her own, and therefore I use it. While my uncle Charles—that most popular of personages among children and servants, from the fact of his being an incarnate *émeute* —a systematic subverter of all established rules, and

defier of existing powers—in short, an ambulating revolution! was alternately flinging some, no doubt, rare jests, in Irish, at Angus Troil the huntsman, whose enormous mouth, stretched even wider by a broad grin, remained wide open ready to bolt them, as one of his pack would have done by a lump of meat,—and then twisting Pomba's beautiful long, soft, smooth, velvety brown ears, he would cry out in Spanish, with a long see-sawing “Ay, ya!” when the dog jumped vehemently up at him in his ecstacy of play:

“Muy Señor mio, y mi dueño?”* till with a great deal more of similar mock courtesy and respect, he had succeeded in extricating his hand from the dog's mouth.

“Get into the carriage, Miss, directly, and don't stand fooling there with the dog,” said my aunt Bell, who, among many other elegant Irishisms, always Missed Grace and myself, when she was angry; so that we were not often addressed without this ceremonious formula; and, on the present occasion, having seconded it with anything but a gentle push, I was about to obey, when my uncle Charles seizing me round the waist, tossed me like a parcel into the hood of his phaeton, and Pomba after me; so that I was perfectly happy with my best friend, from the novel and contraband position in which I found myself, for

* My lord and master: which is the address that inferiors in Spain use to their masters and superiors.

both my aunts kept screaming out : “ Oh, Charles ! Charles ! the child will be killed ! there, bring her down, and put her into the carriage.”

“ Not a bit of it,” said my uncle Charles, as he sprang into the phaeton, gathered up the reins in one hand, and pulled up the collar of his great coat all round his face with the other, previously to seating himself. “ Not a bit of it ; she’s as snug there as a bee in a hive, are’n’t you, Mirry ?”

“ Oh ! much snugger,” cried I, grasping the lining of the hood, till I almost broke my nails, from the intuitive knowledge that possession was nine points of the law ; which, however, as I discovered in after-life, vary like those of the compass for some favoured mortals, who are the spoilt children of misfortune. At the expiration of half an hour’s drive, we arrived at a little creek in the Bay, dignified with the name of pier, where we found the boatswain and four of the crew of ‘The Ocean Pearl,’ Sir George Paulett’s yacht, awaiting us.

“ Beg your pardon, Captain,” said the former, springing out of the pitching boat upon the pier steps, as he touched his hat, and accosted my uncle Charles, “ but I was to give you Captain Boswell’s compliments, and he didn’t think it was a night for the ladies to put to sea, as the wind is right a-head ; and just before we came off, all hands were piped aft to put the ship about, and no boat can live scarce.”

“ Pooh ! Bozzy is always looking out for squalls,

Jeffs," said my uncle Charles ; "and, though I prefer a skin-full of wine to a cap-full of wind, thanks to my intimate knowledge both of the Bay of Biscay and the contrabandistas, I'm neither afraid of the one nor the other : however, it's for the ladies to decide, as the expedition is theirs. Mirry, my trump," added he, jumping out of the phaeton, and throwing the reins to the groom ; "hold on till I come back."

So saying, he walked to the carriage in which my aunts wére, and tapped at the window for them to lower it, which when they had done, he repeated to them Captain Boswell's message.

" Of course," said my aunt Marley with a determined air, alighting from the carriage and walking hastily to the phaeton, from which she ordered me to descend. " Of course, in this barbarous and unenlightened country, intellect is always to be subjugated by ignorance. I don't pretend to control my sister ; every human being should be free. She may come or stay, as she pleases, but I'll not be controlled."

She walked to and fro in a very excited manner, as if all the bystanders had attempted corporeally to impede her progress, which was by no means the case, only my aunt Marley's philosophy was of that high, lofty, and, I may say, inaccessible kind which never lowered itself to the common and ordinary exigencies of life, so that my poor aunt was always left to contend with them by her physical energy alone, which the vulgar were apt to mistake for temper.

My uncle Charles walked hastily up and down with his hands in his pockets, and his hat on one side *à la tapageur*, every now and then tossing his head, and saying : “ Hang me, if I don’t think you are mad ; ” one of those assertions, which in the Hibernian sense of the word madness, viz., to be furiously out of temper, was sure to verify itself. But the same Providence which “ tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,” also presides over the roarings of lions and tigers, and there was this merciful dispensation attending the eruptions of my aunt’s physiological volcanoes, they never both exploded against any third party, at the same time. No, except when engaged in single combat, their tempers were like buckets in a well, whenever one was up the other was down, ay, down to velvet paw and cooing dove point, and, consequently, just as my aunt Marley was about in the same breath to commit tautology and supererogation, by repeating to my uncle Charles, for the twentieth time that day, “ that he was without exception the greatest fool that ever existed”—my aunt Bell advanced, and in the most gentle sou’west tone said, laying her hand upon her sister’s arm :

“ My dearest Marcia, no one wishes to control you : Charles said, it was for you to decide, and we are only waiting for you to do so.”

Such is the power of truth that it leaves the most loquacious or ingenious without a reply ; so finding it impossible to make every body change places with

her, and be in the wrong, which was enough to provoke any one, my aunt Marley, without uttering a word in answer to this exordium, walked majestically on and descending the steps, got into the boat, which by the sudden impetuosity of her *entrée* she nearly capsized. This of course was the fault of the sea, at which she flung an imperious and commanding look, doubtless because ladies in those days were not even as well acquainted with the abridgment of the History of England as they are in these, or she would probably have recollect'd that, with regard to commanding the waves to retire, *Canute* and *cannot* are synonymous.

My uncle Charles, with the expressive pantomime of much southern gesticulation, said something in Spanish to Jeffs, at which, it was evident, it required all the habitual discipline maintained on board the 'Ocean Pearl,' and the rough sleeve of his pea-jacket beside, passed hastily across his mouth to prevent his replying to by a loud laugh. Meanwhile Nelly, having let go my hand, in order to clasp her own, as after crossing herself she fell down in the mud upon both knees to implore St. Luke's *purtection* for us, I made sure of Pomba by taking my uncle Charles's pocket handkerchief, and tying it round the poor animal's neck.

"And why St. Luke, above all the saints in the calendar, Nelly, asthore?" asked my uncle Charles in a brogue as rich as her own, as soon as she had finished her prayer. "I thought St. Luke was a painter?"

"Whisht now, Masther Charless, don't you know

that all the mad-houses does belong to Shaint Luke, (the Lord be wid him this night), and istent it a boat load of mad Shaint Pathers we are just to be fishing for ship-wrecks in the salt says such a night as this, when, I'll be bound, if we could get at the truth of it, the fishes thimselves, poor bastes, do be wishing they wash in the frying-pan even to be out of it."

" Ha, ha, ha, or into the fire itself Nelly, eh ?" said my uncle Charles.

" Faix then, may be so, and small blame to them."

Jeffs was right ; the boat could hardly live, and laden as it was, it offered a ponderous resistance to the storm-lashed waves that was truly terrific ; and more than once were we within an inch of becoming acquainted with the "treasures of the deep," for every time the boat lurched the weight was so excessive that it seemed to be pressed down into the fathomless gulf, without the power of righting itself. But for Jeffs' admirable presence of mind at the helm—as I have since constantly heard—nothing could have saved us. Indeed, I have also been told that my aunt's gratitude to this worthy man was so great, that although not in the habit of having any plan, sentiment, wish, or opinion in common, (save on the score of politics, upon which they were most unanimously republican, that is, addicted to levelling upwards), the same thought had struck them at the same moment.

Though they had plenty of money, as indeed in my infantine financial notions I thought all grown-up

persons had, yet, from an extensive acquaintance with the heroines of the Minerva Press, they preferred acting as if they were bereft of all worldly resources, save that miraculous and inexhaustible stock of beauty, ringlets, white muslin, and jewellery, of which neither shipwrecks, incarceration, famine, nor even years, are able to deprive those singularly-favoured ladies. Therefore, in this spirit of princely pauperism, my aunt Marley had just taken a diamond ring, and my aunt Bell an emerald one, from her finger, to present to the worthy boatswain, when we at length reached the deck of ‘The Ocean Pearl;’ but, unfortunately for Jeffs, my uncle Charles, in slipping a £5 note into his hand, which I have no doubt suited it even better than the diamond and emerald rings would have done, happened to say :

“ Why, Jeffs, my hearty ! Pitt was a fool to you ; you are the real pilot that’s weathered the storm.”

Upon which, my aunt Marley, thinking the comparison odious, turned to Jeffs, with such a gesture of authority, and at the same time of appeal, that had a new coinage been about to be struck, it would have done admirably as a model for that of Britannia ruling the two inches of tributary waves which skirt her extensive dominions, on the reverse of a halfpenny, and said :

“ I am sure you are too honest a man not to hate the very name of Pitt ?”

“ Why, no, Ma’am : I can’t say as I hates any one,

not to say downright properly hates 'em, unless it be the French, and Mother Carey's chickens," said Jeffs, as having removed a quid of tobacco from a silver box, in the shape of a high-heeled shoe (said to be the exact size and model of Her Royal Highness the Duchess of York's), was, as he himself would have expressed it, "stowing away my uncle Charles's £5 note at the other end of it." "And lor, Ma'am," continued he, as he returned his portable bank into histrousers' pocket, "I considers politics is just like sperits—some takes to one sort, and some to another; it all depends upon which one's been brought up to, and what one's 'customed to; and all I know is, aboard the 'Victory' we aless (always) gave three cheers for Billy Pitt, and I must say, I wish as we'd a done it oftener, for worse luck that we didn't."

"How so?" inquired my uncle Charles, as both my aunts, with a contemptuous shrug, returned their respective rings to the snowy fingers upon which they were wont to sparkle, but still riveted to the spot by a curiosity to hear the boatswain's reply—a curiosity which even my aunt Marley's great mind was not superior to; for all persons in the war, however democratic their opinions might be otherwise, were great hero-worshippers; and the fact of Jeffs having served under Nelson, was quite sufficient to insure him even my aunt Marley's philosophical attention.

"Why, you see, Captain," said the boatswain, "this

is how it ware. The first mate aboard the ‘Victory,’ was as reglar a true blue as ever ran down a privateer —a staunch Pittite as ever drew breath, as you may ’spose, when he used to argey, that even the baccy was all the better for being taxed, and never drank nothink but gin ashore, for fear he should be guilty of drinking run brandy, or rum unawares. Well, it was aless his way, when all hands was piped to breakfast, or dinner, to give three cheers for Billy Pitt, as a sort of grace like, but more especially whenever the decks was cleared for action; and on the very morning of the 19th of October, as we was a lying off Trafalgar, and had just squared yards, and every gun was manned. ‘I say, Jeffs,’ says he, putting his finger to the starboard side of his nose, and winking up at Lady Hamilton’s picter, as was nailed to the mast-head, ‘it hain’t the picter as ’ill do it—it’s three cheers for the pilot as has weathered the storm—for Billy Pi—;’ but afore he could finish the word, the Admiral ordered the ‘Victory’ to be put about, and brought alongside of the ‘Santissima Trinidad.’ He’d hardly given the command, when that cursed rifleman from the ‘Bucentaure’ sends his murderous bullet whizzing clean through Nelson’s heart—the first and last shot that had ever made *it* quail.

“‘I knew it!’ said the first mate—we all knew it then, and so did the whole world soon after. It ’ill be seven year now, come the 19th of next October,”

concluded Jeffs, passing the back of his hand across his eyes; “and yet, somehow or other, my heart springs a leak every time I think of it.”

“I don’t wonder at your devotion to the memory of Nelson,” said my aunt Marley; “but on that very account you ought to execrate the name of Pitt, for but for his barbarous and bloodthirsty love of war, Nelson might have been alive now.”

This was the very last argument likely to make a convert of a British tar, especially one of 1812, as my aunt soon perceived by Jeffs’ reply.

“To be sure, Ma’am,” said he, “Pitt was the sailor and sojer’s best friend—ales for keeping up the army and navvy—and no one can deny as he was a true patriot; as I have heerd say a many times, that his last words was, ‘Oh, my country !’ ”

“Ah!” cried my uncle Charles, who sometimes perpetrated a spurious witticism, “turn about, you know, Jeffs, is fair play; and all his life his *first* words were, ‘*Pay*, my country,’ for he did make it pay for everything with a vengeance! even for the light of heaven, which was too bad in a ‘heaven-born minister;’ but this, no doubt, was a cunning device, to prevent the Whigs, as well as the people, from seeing day-light.”

This *mot* of my uncle Charles’s I had heard repeated so frequently, that I have no merit in remembering it; and, as for the death of Nelson, so often and graphically had I heard that described by Jeffs in after

years, that, were I an artist I could certainly paint a very fine historical picture from his description of it. What happened after the foregoing conversation I know not, for Grace and I were conveyed to our respective berths. All I know to a certainty is, that between one and two in the morning, Nelly, white, as her own cap, seized me from the cabin floor on to which I had been thrown by a tremendous lurch—for the ship had struck ! and we had only time to reach the deck, and from thence be transferred to the boat, where Jeffs did his best to keep my aunts quiet, at least sedentary ; for Captain Boswell persisted in remaining in the ‘ Ocean Pearl,’ determined either to save or perish with her.

Poor Pomba had jumped into the sea, and scrambled up to the sides of the boat, which she very nearly capsized, and into which Jeffs lifted her by the nape of the neck, quite as much with a view to the safety of the crew, as out of kindness to the poor animal. All that I can remember of this eventful night, or rather the six-and-twenty terrible hours that ensued, is, that the waves were mountains high, that the sea birds shrieked, and the storm raged ; and so did my aunts, as each accused the other of being the cause, not only of our putting to sea, but even of the elemental hurricane, which, I think, must have been heartily ashamed of the mediocrity of its performance, when it perceived how far it was outdone by my aunts’ vocal *tours de force*. Such, I have no doubt was the case, as towards eight o’clock in the morning it retired exhausted from

the contest : but the poor boat had sprung a leak, and though Jeffs and my uncle Charles took it, turn about, to pump most indefatigably, another hour must inevitably have introduced us to the mysteries of the deep, had not Jeffs hailed a large fishing-boat, with a latteen sail, whose two occupants not only consented to receive us, but for £20 to convey us to Milford Haven.

No sooner were we transferred to this ark of salvation, than Nelly very properly made Grace and me kneel down to thank God for our deliverance ; and most fervently did we enunciate that portion of the Lord's Prayer which implores "our daily bread" as hunger had become a perfect giant, for oh ! nature in youth at least, thou art omnipotent ; and thy two first great laws, hunger and sleep ! not even those mighty autocrats sorrow, and fear, (which rule our after-lives) can then set aside. But when we asked for bread ; though it is true Nelly did not give us a stone, which would have been difficult, seeing our actual *locale* ; yet she silenced this gastronomic extravaganza, with a—

" Whisht ! now, young ladies, sure it's no time to be giving yerselves up to gluttony and faisting (feasting) whin y'eve just escaped bane made breakquist for the fishes ; an though it's hard to know another person's intarior at any toime even, a whales, yet you that do be so curious Miss Mirry. I'm thinking for oncest you'd have had enough to stare at, if instead of seeing this bright sun show'ring down diamonds and jules, by

the sack full, all over the say, and enjoying these light brazes, (glory be to God for the same) you'd ave bin like Jonah, by this time prying into some whale's private affairs, without even the chance of getting turned out for yer pains."

It was a common oratorical *ruse* with Nelly to become allegorical in her discourse, and pile simile upon simile, when she wanted to lure away our wills, by means of our imaginations, from any forbidden or unattainable point; and generally her success was perfect as the curiosity excited by her tropes and figures gave rise to such a multiplicity of questions that the labyrinth became complete, and in searching for a clue to it, we were sure to be led far and wide of the premises from whence we had started.

But what chance have the brilliant but fragile flowers of eloquence against the iron logic and stubborn facts of hunger? and we now only clung to Nelly's dress, with a low pertinacious wail, Grace saying in her quiet gentle way :

"Do, if you please, Nelly, give us something to eat for we are very hungry." And I in a sort of imaginative despair conjuring up chimerical banquets in some submarine whale hotel and saying :

"But if the whales would give us any breakfast let us go to them! do, Nelly!" and the "do, Nelly" was always a *dacapo*, accompanied by violent pulling of her gown with both hands, as I looked up into her face with streaming eyes.

"Faix but this bangs the storm!" cried Nelly, able to stand it no longer, and as was her wont, assuming anger to disguise feeling, "and it's a sin and a shame."

"So it is, Mrs. Marley, Ma'am, to have dragged the poor innocent childer into starvation in this way,—thim that's been used to the best of good fading; and it's the masther that it wudn't be safe to see, I'm thinking, when he returns from the Lord's, and finds they're not in it. Och! Weresthrew! Weresthrew! but you may b'lave me, St. Patherick himself hasn't got the meracle that could be afther quitingen him."

Nelly sobbed and roared, and rocked herself to and fro, insensible to all the "unenlightened impertinent savages" my Aunt Marley lavished on her, and equally deaf to the consolations which Jeffs and the fishermen tendered for her acceptance, till the latter produced from the locker two pieces of very hard, and very brown, or rather black bread, half of a dried haddock which had been broiled, and a little fresh, or at least soft water, which they poured from a stone jar into a little rusty tin-can. The haddock was declined, but the bread gratefully accepted by Nelly, which she steeped in the water for us till it became a little malleable. This repast we actually thought delicious! especially a slight tarry aroma in the water, and a musty twang in the bread, which we with truth declared we had never tasted in any other; and perhaps it was from this profane love of novelty inherent in our fallen nature that we both pronounced it "so nice!"

"Ah ! thin it's wild you want to dhrive me entirely," said Nelly, snatching the third piece of this charming *Ambigu* of mouldy bread, steeped in tarry water, that was finding its way as a freewill offering from my hunger to poor Pomba. "If it's so nice, why don't you kape it Miss ; and there no more to be had, only starvation in plinty, and to spare for uz all. And sure, childer is not knowledgeable to stand being famished like grown paple."

"By the bye," cried my Uncle Charles, drawing four captain's biscuits and a bottle of brandy from his pocket, (for he was the foreshadowing of Captain Dalgetty, and seldom forgot the provant,) here's all I could seize in the hurry, "but take one, Grace, and give half to Mirry," said he, offering her a biscuit :— but to say the truth, we were both rather sick—not indeed from the quantity, but from the quality, of our repast, and so we declined it. He then gave a biscuit (which at the time was like giving a principality) to each of my aunts, and offered the other two to Martin (my Aunt Marley's maid,) and Nelly ; but the latter, though she took it eagerly, conveyed it to her pocket, declaring that she was "Not the laste hungry, and couldn't touch a bit aven if Belshazzer's faste was spread before her."

Poor Nelly ! the fraud was a pious one ; and I have no doubt but the flock of sea-gulls that skimmed the waters at that moment caught up thy true motive with thy false words, and despite the preventive record

of the Recording Angel, ran it into heaven as a virtue! for when the night again came on, and not a crumb of food remained,—after in vain trying to hush us to sleep, and keep it for the desperation of the morrow, Nelly produced her biscuit, and divided it between Grace and me; which with the thoughtless selfishness of childhood we devoured, without once recollecting till the last morsel had vanished that she had not tasted food for what appeared to us several days, but what was in reality nineteen hours. Our own hunger being still unappeased, we began with many tears to bewail poor Nelly's, who as usual, in all cases of conflicting feeling, read the riot act of anger, to restore order, and balance the equilibrium of her own authority.

" Whisht, now, young ladies, be quite, and don't be afther meddling wid what don't concarn yez; why shouldn't I ate if I plased it? Sure, there's fish enough in the say, I suppose, if it was hungry I was."

The night came on, cold and cloudy; a few large drops of rain fell at intervals, as if the sullen sky, in its dark pride, did its uttermost to retain them, till goaded past endurance by the muttered threatenings of the storm they at length fell in torrents, followed by a loud clap of thunder. Jeffs looked up, and shook his head, as the fishermen reefed their solitary sail, while my aunts began to reciprocate reproaches touching their respective authorship of the perils we were enduring.

At this unlucky juncture, I complained of the cold, and asked my Aunt Bell "When—when we should get on shore, and go to bed?" why, Heaven only knows, but this query of mine had such an exasperating effect upon her, that instead of replying to it in the common-place matter-of-fact way that would have best suited my anxiety, she took that opportunity not only of informing me that I was a little monster, but of letting me into a piece of the family history, of which till then I had been happily ignorant; namely, that I deserved never to know the comfort of a bed again, considering that I it was, who had brought my poor mother to her death-bed. At this, cold, hunger, sleep, all, were fused in one bitter, burning flood of tears, such as only the heart of a child in its undiscriminating agony can pour out; for childhood, in its fresh prodigality of feeling, is as lavish of its grief as it is of its money; it is only Time in unwinding our clue of life, by bringing us so many necessities for each, that makes us coldly economical of both.

"I, the cause of mamma's death! oh, no, no! Aunt Bell, don't say that. I'll be a monster, or anything else you please, if you will only unsay that I killed mamma," sobbed I, convulsively grasping her cloak but only breaking my own nails in the effort, as she, and the wind together, soon shook me off.

"You did, Miss," was her sharp reply; "for if she had not sat up nursing you in the measles all those

long winter nights, she would not have caught cold, and died."

At this speech Nelly was up in arms, and, catching me to her bosom, wrapping her own cloak tightly about me, and rocking me to and fro, as she impatiently stamped her foot, exclaimed :

" Oh ! thin, indade, Miss Bell Paulett, as I am a living sinner dis night, and may soon be a dead one, if it was not that de best always goes fust—it's not de misthress, the Lord be wid her soul, I'm thinking, wud have been taken, but other papple, dat wasn't fit for it ; and den, may be, you wudn't have been here now, to have hammered de nails out of her coffin into de innocent heart of her poor orphan child, in de way you've been doing, and more shame to you !"

" Oh, Nelly ! Nelly ! I didn't kill mamma, did I ?"

" No, me darlint, that you didn't, and so she'll tell you herself wan (one) of these days, please God, whin you do be an angel in hiven along wid her," said Nelly, hugging me.

" Oh, thank you, Nelly, and it's not cold in Heaven as it is here, is it Nelly ?" asked I, skipping with the volatility of childhood to another range of ideas, and questioning Nelly with an implicit belief in her accurate and profound knowledge of all things in heaven and earth, which at that time nothing on the latter could have shaken.

" No, mavourneen, it is not."

"And how warm is it, Nelly?"

"Why, a thrifle warmer than May, and a few sun-bames brighter than July," replied Nelly, nothing daunted, and with all the assurance of a celestial almanack.

"And there's everything in heaven, isn't there, Nelly?"

"Ave coorse, except may be old maids, just, and husbands," said Nelly.

The first exception, no doubt, was a stone in my Aunt Bell's garden, judging by the indignant glance that Nelly flashed at her; and the latter had reference to Nelly's own domestic misfortunes, for though now a member of the only really free state that exists—that of widowhood—she had had a bitter bad husband: and in my onward journey through the world, as I grew up, I could not but remark that bad husbands, like confluent small-pox, even when they die away leave indelible traces for life upon their victims. Nelly, it is true, had great comfort in her daughter, Norah, but Dermot seemed to consider himself heir-at-law to his father's powers of tormenting.

Whether it was Nelly's soothing descriptions of heaven in particular, in which she drew graphic little *tableaux de genre* of angels—reclining upon flowery banks, quaffing cups of cream, and eating cakes of honey,—or her general metaphysics, that sent me at last into a sound sleep, I know not; but, according to

the Scotchman's very accurate definition of metaphysics being "whan a body war talking aboot what tha dinna understan" to a person that did "na ken what they war saying," I rather think it must have been the latter.

All I do know is, that I did not awaken till the next morning, when we landed at Milford Haven; and I very much doubt if Richmond's Earl felt half so elated when he landed there, flushed with high hopes, and intent upon his enterprise against the ruthless Hero of Bosworth, as I did upon seeing the print of my tiny red shoes in the sand, and hearing an amiable waiter from the hotel announce that we should have breakfast immediately.

CHAPTER III.

THREE days were passed at Milford before any tidings arrived of the ‘Ocean Pearl;’ when at length, one morning while my aunts were at breakfast, Captain Boswell made his appearance, stating that the ‘Aphrodite’ sloop of war had taken him on board, and towed the dilapidated yacht as far as Milford Haven, for which port he concluded that Jeffs had steered, if indeed the boat had been able to weather the storm; but the ‘Ocean Pearl,’ he said, would take at least three weeks before she could be made either ship-shape, or seaworthy; and he therefore requested that “the ladies would have the goodness instantly to write to Sir George Paulett, to exonerate him from blame, as it was quite contrary to his advice that they had embarked in such uncertain weather, or at night at all.”

“Ay, ay, Bozzy, all right,” cried my Uncle Charles,

leaning back in his chair, and laughing as he held the remaining wing of a grouse on his fork in abeyance : “hang me, man, if you are not a sort of naval pack,—I don’t mean a pedlar’s pack, but Sir Denis Pack,—who in the Peninsula never let us do the most simple thing without invoking the bug-bear responsibility ! or scarcely ventured to eat his own dinner for fear of risking the responsibility of an indigestion, till he frightened all the other fellows on his staff into as uncompromising a timidity as his own ; but I never used to mind him, but always went on eating, drinking, sleeping, fighting, foraging, charging, or cachouchaing, as the case might be ; with, however, a muttered obligato, adagio accompaniment of pag, pag ! responsibility, pag !”

“Very good, Sir,” smiled Captain Boswell ; “but you know, such insubordination in our service would be considered rank Pag-anism.”

“Ha, ha, ha ! not bad for a bumpkin ; but fie, Bozzy, I am ashamed of you,” continued my Uncle Charles, shaking his head. “I’ll let my uncle know that you keep smuggled puns on board his orthodox government yacht !”

“Can’t help it, Sir, if you do,” said Captain Boswell, smoothing one side of his hat with the under-part of his right-arm, while the scar on his left cheek reddened into unison with the rest of his good-humoured face ; “but I’m not much afraid, for I think Sir George—

God bless him—loves a jest too well not to consider run puns all the more *racy*."

"My dear friend," cried my Uncle Charles, with his mouth full of grouse and laughter, which he endeavoured to conceal by holding his napkin before it, as he rose up and walked deliberately over to Captain Boswell, and placing his two hands on that worthy man's broad shoulder, went on to say, "do let me entreat you to leave the room before you commit yourself further, and while you are yet safe from my just indignation!"

My aunts, who the very day after their arrival had driven over to Pembroke in quest of a milliner to replenish their absent wardrobes, and consequently had both very becoming caps on, and who moreover chanced to be in most superlatively good humour, a phenomenon which, to do them justice, did sometimes happen, when all things both in the interior and exterior world concurred to please them, as they seemed to have done on this auspicious day, with one voice, before the door closed on Captain Boswell, expressed a hope that they should have the pleasure of seeing him at dinner; for they were always gracious and patronizing in the extreme, when no untoward *contretemps* sprang up to ruffle their good breeding, or mar their courtesy.

For my own part, had it not been for occasional fits of impatience to reach —, and ascertain whether my grand-uncle, Paulett, was like his picture, and as

kind as every one said he was, I should have been perfectly satisfied to have passed the rest of my life at Milford, as Grace and I had unlimited liberty all day long of picking up shells upon the beach, with only the gentle restraint of an occasional “don’t go so near de waves, and wit your fact, darlints,” from Nelly, while she strolled after us, knitting her stockings, or our socks, with an ardour and imperturbability that would have done credit to a German *frau*, or a Vaudoise *femme de charge*.

Then there was the delicious *laissez aller* of an inn life, which suited my desultory nature marvellously, with the contraband tea and toast that had replaced the orthodox bread and milk, morning and evening, and the dining down stairs with my aunts, with a dessert à *discretion*, or rather à *indiscretion*, in lieu of the usual tariff, of a peach or a plum, which like the house were divided against themselves, and therefore could not stand in our estimation as a sufficiency; but above all, Pomba was promoted from the straw in the stable to the horse-hair sofa of the inn sitting-room; and all the lesson-books were not exactly where I had so often wished them—at the bottom of the sea; but the next best thing to it—on board the yacht. Now, since, I have often felt convinced that this Milford saturnalia was a master-stroke in domestic diplomacy upon the part of my aunts to obliterate from our young minds the perils and privations of the fishing-boat, and induce us ever after, in recurring to this journey, to speak of it as

the very pleasantest and most delightful episode in our existence, a sort of protocol, in short, that should render the most stubborn facts null and void; if so, so well did they succeed, that when at length ‘The Ocean Pearl’ was re-set, and all things were ready for our departure, I felt as sorry and as downcast, as if I had taken a homœopathic globule of expulsion from Paradise! that terrible infusion of colocynth! which our mother Eve has bequeathed, more or less, to all, in the human family herbal, which she has left for our use. I think, too, Nelly, must have had a happy time of it during our *séjour* at Milford, if only from the “polite attentions” which I could not but observe Mr. Jeffs paid her, such as spreading a new red and yellow Indian silk pocket-handkerchief for her whenever she sat upon the sands, till Grace and I used to wonder how he came always to have a new silk handkerchief ready folded in the pocket of his jacket, as if it had sprung up there, like a mushroom, for that especial purpose. Moreover, he had a particularly dexterous knack of opening cockles, the contents of which he would present to Nelly on the point of his knife, and then, give the shells to us. I further observed, that after the first time he had offered the Duchess of York’s shoe to Nelly, and she had declined partaking of its contents upon the plea that she never took snuff, and did not like sneezing, “except whin she had a *could* in her head, and couldn’t help it,” three days from thence, he had had the silver model of her Royal Highness’s shoe re-

guilt inside, and filled up with caraway comfits, which Nelly did not refuse ; and which Grace and I could not help owning to ourselves in confidence, we thought a great change for the better.

Still, altogether he was a strange, inconsistent, absent sort of man was that Jeffs ; for I particularly remember one day that Grace and I were perfectly broiled, from a two hours' pursuit of shells under a meridian sun, and that we came panting up to Nelly, to ask her to untie our bonnets, as she was sitting upon a fragment of rock, winding a ball of cotton off a skein that Jeffs was holding for her, he suddenly let his hands fall, and the skein with them, as if he had been shot ; and when Nelly said reproachfully :

“ Tut—tut ; here’s a to do ; you’ve got me finely entangled, Mr. Jeffs.”

Instead of begging her pardon, as he ought to have done, he only said :

“ I wish I had, Mrs. Bawn.”

And Nelly said nothing, but got up, and walked slowly on with us, while Jeffs who remained behind, sticking his clasp-knife backwards and forwards in the rock, soon followed us ; and then said to Grace and me, though we were still panting with heat : -

“ Run on, and warm yourselves ; there’s good little dears !”

I burst out laughing and repeated, “ warm ourselves !” but Grace plucked me by the sleeve, saying in a whisper :

“ Come away, Mirry, for do you know I think Jeffs is what they call a madman.”

Even at this distance of time, after I have seen so many madmen of every description up and down that vast Bedlam—the world—looking back upon poor Grace’s opinion of Mr. Jeff’s state of mind during that walk, I don’t think she was much out.

What must have considerably added to the comfort and tranquillity of Nelly’s life at this time was, that not once, during the three weeks and a half that we remained at Milford, had we made the slightest delay or demur about going to bed—for the two nights at sea, in an open boat, had done more to impress us with a due appreciation of that greatest of all creature comforts, than all Nelly could have coaxed, or my aunts threatened. The latter, I suspect, had their own private reasons for not being more dissatisfied than the rest of the party at their detention in what had been to us literally a haven of salvation ; for, in the first place, they had my Uncle Charles alternately to pet and to scold ; in the next, they had been exploring the country on Welch ponies, and as they were both much given to trying curious experiments in dress—as indeed most persons, both male and female, were during the War, when people were left to their own devices in the way of costume. All that can be said upon that score is, that there is this difference between the human heart and the inhuman taste of the Anglo-Saxons, in all matters of personal adornment, namely, that we

have high authority for knowing the former to be “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;” whereas, from my own personal experience and observation, I can without fear of contradiction aver, that the latter is erroneous above all things, and desperately ridiculous; as one proof, among many, of which my misguided relatives had got a strange notion into their heads, that the Cambrian *coiffure* was peculiarly becoming!—The consequence was, that aggravated symptoms of this monomania broke out in both of them on the morning of our re-embarkation on board the ‘Ocean Pearl,’ when, surmounting their bottle-green habits (which appeared suffering from a perfect erysipelas of sugar-loaf buttons) were their night-caps, or at least what looked like them, in partial eclipse, from an Heliacal rising above them of a man’s hat. This extraordinary costume caused them, on account of my aunt Marley’s extreme height, and by Aunt Bell’s diminutiveness, to look like some sort of quaint hieroglyphical representation of the Great and Lesser Bear.

CHAPTER IV.

I HAVE nothing remarkable to relate of our second voyage, except that both my aunts and the elements were unusually calm ; and that my Aunt Marley, every day after dinner, assiduously endeavoured to enlighten Captain Boswell's mind, by instilling into it democratic and levelling principles, or rather anti-principles, though he never ceased assuring her, that they would be utterly useless to him in the navy, as they were a sort of cargo he dare not take on board any ship in his Majesty's service. While my Aunt Marley encountered this " vexation of spirit," my Aunt Bell was fain to content herself with the other half of our terrestrial heritage, " vanity ;" as upon the strength of her very fierce black eyes, my Uncle Charles had assured her that no Andalusian he had ever seen was half so beautiful ; the result of which was, that in setting up

for the queen of hearts, Bell left me minus the ace of spades ; for not possessing a high comb, with that prompt resource which is so sure a proof of genius, she had spoiled my set of Lilliputian gardening tools, by having had the handle chopped off the spade, the shovel of which was in some miraculous manner planted in her hair, *vice* the absent comb, and, in conjunction with a black silk scarf, did duty as a Spanish mantilla.

Poor Nelly not being as good a sailor as the rest of us, we were chiefly confided to the care of Martin ; but it is worthy of remark that nothing could be more amiably obliging than Jeffs was, in performing little works of supererogation, by sparing the steward sundry journeys to and fro to Nelly's cabin, when she was unable to come on deck. I mention this as a proof that men are not so selfish as they are generally supposed to be ; but that they are always ready to do—what they like ! Grace would quietly pass the day reading an old translation of the Comtesse d'Anois' Fairy Tales, bound uniformly with 'The Princess of Cleves,' in venerable brown leather, which had become black, and polished with age, and which contained the pictures of the original edition—rough wood-cuts, that accused "The fair one with locks of gold," of a desperate obliquity of vision, to which there is not the slightest allusion made in her Memoirs, and that converted "The Blue Bird" into the blackest of black birds !—but which, nevertheless, constituted the delight of the

first ten—indeed, I might with truth say of the first fifteen years of our lives.

The Comtesse d'Anois used to be occasionally relieved by Miss Edgeworth, and Mrs. Trimmer, and one day I had really exhausted myself in my indefatigable exertions to give air and exercise to Miss Wapsey, whose whilome cherry cheeks, I grieve to say (what with the hasty packing, the friction of the tartan shawl she had been tied up in, the shipwreck, and one little *contre temps* or another), had become as pale as those of the White Lady of Avenel. Well, one day that I found neither the sea-air, nor pacing the quarter-deck, could restore their bloom, I put her into her cradle, with pigeon, (for Pomba means pigeon in Portuguese) to watch over her slumbers, and sat down by Grace, who was quietly reading the story of ‘The little Merchants,’ in ‘The Parents’ Assistant ;’ but as, like all dunces, I did not possess many resources within myself, and, therefore, generally played the bore-active in levying contributions upon the time, patience, and powers, of others, I put my arm round Grace’s neck, saying, “*Do* read out to me, Grace !”

“If I hold the book between us ; can’t you read to yourself ?” said Grace.

“No, because you know, I can’t read the long words.”

“But there are no long words, and I’ve almost finished it; it’s such a nice story : it’s almost a pity ;—however, I’ll go back.”

"No, no," cried I, stopping my ears, "don't go back; I won't listen if you go back; only tell me what it's about, and then go on from where you are reading."

Grace, always ready to oblige, still wished to begin the story at the beginning; but at length I overruled her good nature, and, after having given me a *résumé* of the honest and dishonest proceedings of the two little Neapolitans; the account of the burnt almonds not only made my mouth water, but also giving me sundry qualms of conscience that, under similar temptations, my probity would not be more impregnable than Carlo's was, she went on with the tale, when suddenly the description of the grapes and figs, which Francisco was taking to market, made me exclaim: "What a pity!"

"What's a pity?" asked Grace.

"Why, that we are not going to Naples now, instead of to ——, for then we should be able to get some of Francisco's fine grapes, and figs."

"Oh! if that's all, you will get quite as good, or, indeed, better at ——; for I have read," said Grace, "that the fruit there is so much better than at Naples, as it is taken more care of."

"Dear me, how happy you are, Grace!" cried I; "you knew everything."

"Everything! Oh, Mirry!" laughed Grace, "if one was to live two hundred years, one would not know everything."

" Well, but you know a great deal, and that's almost everything."

" No, indeed I don't ; I know nothing ; and Aunt Marley says that is all that any one can know."

" Oh, does she ? I'm so glad !" cried I, clapping my hands. " I'm so glad ! for then I need not learn any more lessons, for I know nothing already : and as I can only know that, what is the use of learning to know it, when one knows it without ?"

" Oh, because one must learn something, or one would be too ignorant."

" Then it's not true of you, to say that you know nothing, Grace ; for you do know something; now don't you ?"

" Why, yes," rejoined Grace, laughing, as she kissed my forehead ; " I know that I love you, Mirry, and papa, and my aunts."

" Well, that is something, Grace !"

Alas ! that even our own feelings should be to us hieroglyphics, engraven in the night of ages by nature's cunning hand, upon the mysterious obelisks of life, so broad and flowing at their base ! so sharp and angular at their consummation ! Hieroglyphics, too, which none but that great universal teacher and *savant Time!* can translate for us. It was not till after-years had stripped these early affections one by one from my heart, and scattered them like withered leaves along my path, that I felt the depth of prophetic truth contained in the childish reply of :—

“ Well, *that is something*, Grace !”

As one day at sea generally resembles another in its wearisome monotony, nothing occurred to enliven, or to interrupt the even tenour of our way, till the happy morning that Jeffs announced to Nelly that we were off ——. We might have sailed unmolestedly into its bay at eight o’clock in the morning; but as my aunts very justly concluded, that Sir George (and consequently a part of his staff) would be down at the pier to meet them, they wisely reflected, that as there would, in all probability, be at least a leash of Aids-de-Camp, a brace of Secretaries, and a Brigade-Major, or so, for their first *battue* they ought to be armed accordingly. So that their toilet was not a thing to be lightly and unadvisedly hurried over; for though to do them justice their implicit faith in the all sufficiency of their own attractions, was quite Calvinistic; yet, on that very account, as both Luther and Calvin have impiously and paradoxically declared that, “good works are not only unnecessary, but militate against salvation!” my aunts thought *cæteris paribus*, that good works must aid distraction. So that the fortifications of ribbon, gauze, feathers, and flowers, that they threw up on that occasion, would not only be incredible, but inexplicable to persons living in these more rational and costume-regulated times, when all the world dress, perhaps, “not wisely, but too well !”

The consequence was, that Captain Boswell had received orders not to sail into port before twelve

o'clock ; and yet notwithstanding these four long hours of engineering, my aunts finally terminated in a kind of demi-flour sack, called at that time a short pelisse ; and certainly the shorter this absurd fashion the better. My Aunt Marley's bag was composed of a sort of lilac-twilled, and shot-silk, with a vermicelli pattern, flowing all over it, and trimmed with a deep flounce of black Flanders lace. My Aunt Bell wore a similar sort of ease, with the exception of its being a pale jonquil colour, studded at intervals with unfettered shamrocks, in all the *abandon* of single blessedness, and trimmed with white lace. On their heads were white chip inventions, much resembling carpenters' baskets, but called at the time gipsy hats, with a wreath of artificial May (though it was now the beginning of October), budding and blooming round each of them.

I really think that Nelly was little less long over our toilets, though no one would ever have suspected it, who beheld its almost raw material simplicity ; for though feeding children was well understood in those days, people seemed (from the highest to the lowest) to think clothing them unnecessary,—as they appeared to consider their necessities in this way were provided for in the schedule of “tempering the wind to the shorn lamb.”

After some half dozen quotidian obliterated nankin frocks, (which both Nelly and my aunts, strange to say, used to call “Rockets,” why ? heaven only knows, as I am sorry to say they never went off, but clung

to us for years.) Our wardrobe in point of gala dresses, consisted of two white cambric muslin frocks each, every two months looking as if they had lost a tooth by the unsightly gap occasioned by the letting down of a tuck ; moreover, they bore multiplied evidences of Nelly's notability, as they were thickly inoculated with darns, some of which paired off with occasional iron moulds, with trousers to match. The bodies of these frocks, evinced the true spirit of a liberal economy—that is, they displayed great plenty in one way, namely, the width, while on the other hand, they had no *waist* at all ! The sleeves were very short, having no more fulness, than may be seen in a pair of young gentleman's Russia ducks ; and yet they were treated as if they had been small balloons, and divided up the centre by a network of cotton twist, debarred from any exercise of freewill by an arbitrary button of the same material ; a charity school girl's tippet, and a pair of long white cambric muslin gloves, generally much torn and worn at the fingers, with a cambric muslin bonnet, full of cotton drawings, which like “the course of true love, never yet ran smooth !” but were eternally crossing and re-crossing each other, something after the fashion of the paste machinations of an open raspberry or greengage tart ; and a large cambric muslin pennant of distress at the back called “a curtain,” to keep the sun from our necks, completed our youthful and unpretending costume.

After these minute details; it is only the ignorant and illiterate perhaps, who will wonder at the time bestowed upon our appearance, on this memorable morning. For as it is well known, that Dr. Johnson used to write off his ponderous elaborations *currente calamo*,—while Sterne used to belabour the flanks of his mock-sentiment Rosinanti, and hammer down a commonplace by the hour together, before he could produce one of his obvious touches of nature, and complex simplicity's! So, in like manner, had Nelly laboured all the morning at our charming simplicity of appearance, for the frocks had been ironed and re-ironed, to try and make the last emancipated tuck look as if it had never existed, or having existed, had never been abolished, but all in vain ! There it stared gaping and hideous ; and as visible to the naked eye as Caesar's wounds were, when pointed out to the Roman mob by Marc Antony ;—to say nothing of two much-faded, and crumpled, blue lute-string sashes, whose fleeting colours, she had in vain tried to recal by such restoratives, as soap and water, powder-blue, and a cool iron. But so ill did they repay her humane exertions, that even at that time I half suspected (and since that time I have been convinced) that it would have been better to have left them to a watery grave at the bottom of the wash-hand-basin. Nelly, however, thought otherwise, so on they went.

Nelly's own dress, upon this memorable occasion, presented a gorgeous variety, and body of colour, which

had Mr. Turner beheld, he would have been fully justified in indicting her for a burglary upon one of his sunsets ! The gown itself, consisting of a bright purple cotton, strewed with a parterre of orange-coloured flowers ; a shawl as green as a Devonshire meadow, with an amaranthine border, bright as the asphodel of the Elysian fields, draped her shoulders ; bright *coquelicot* ribbons adorned her cap, the voluminous sun-flower-looking border of which appeared to be visibly and momentarily blowing and expanding. But, as our brightest virtues are dimmed by some opposing fault, so Nelly's coquelicot ribbons were mellowed down by the subdued tones of a brown beaver bonnet, guiltless of the "foreign aid of ornament," and, indeed, resembling that "Unprotected female," the lovely young Lavinia, in other respects, for it, like her, seemed to have "no stay, save innocence, and Heaven," as it flapped about, according to the caprices of the wind, in all directions. A pair of new white silk gloves completed this *toilette recherchée* ; but there are gloves, occult sort of gloves, which are sacred to the wear of a certain species of old women, the finger-ends of which always appear to be vowed to the celebration of some Eleusinian mysteries, into which they never allow the fingers of their wearers to penetrate—and of this sacrosanct order were Nelly's ; in her hand, she grasped, not a truncheon, but a pocket-handkerchief, tightly folded, which for size and texture, bore a strong family likeness to a sheet. In the ' Ma-

gazin de Modes' description I have given, for the benefit of future ages, of my Aunts' dress, I forgot to mention that, despising the usual adjuncts of "leather and prunella," my Aunt Marley wore a pair of emerald-green satin boots, while my Aunt Bell, who considered her foot as only second to Cinderella's, and insulted by any comparison with that of the Venus de Medici's, stood resolutely on this modest ground in a pair of lilac satin *brodequins*. Even Jeffs, as he would himself have said, carried more sail than usual, in a shirt-collar that came up so high all round, nearly meeting in front, and its perpendicular fully secured by his large broad red ears dropping over its snowy wall on each side, that he looked more like that most popular of all nursery pantomimic heroes, Jack in a Box, than a mere flesh-and-blood every-day personage.

My Uncle Charles, having donned his aid-de-camp's uniform, and all things being now ready, Captain Boswell had orders to weigh anchor, and sail gallantly into port. The 'Ocean Pearl,' having all her yards manned, and being dressed in colours, with her union-jack hoisted, really deserved her name, for she looked a perfect gem. A quantity of cushions and squabs having been brought out of the cabin to the benches on deck, my aunts had nothing now left to do but to recline gracefully at either end of the same bench, for that *looked* more united and affectionate than sitting on separate ones; we were also made to kneel on one knee, not on both, as we had at first flumped down,

Grace at my Aunt Marley's feet, and I at my Aunt Bell's, who, by the bye, hurt my elbow terribly in twisting me into the proper attitude.

As we neared the pier, besides the carriages that were waiting for us, my aunts had the satisfaction of seeing that they had not laboured in vain, for my Grand-Uncle Paulett was on horseback, accompanied by the whole of his brilliant staff. And here, I must mention a circumstance, which might have led one to suppose that we had returned to Ireland, and that the natives were blundering out a cordial greeting to us ; for as we approached, the band of the — regiment struck up ‘Lord Moira’s welcome to Scotland.’ Why ? At this distance of time, it would be difficult to say, considering that, even taking us altogether, we did not amount to Lord Moira, and that Scotland was not the land we were arriving at ; I can only therefore suppose, that “it was a way they had” in the war ! for a short time after the peace, in the year 1818, a set of Englishmen gave a sort of “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity” dinner, to several members of the allied army then in Paris ; and as, of course, there can be no such thing as either liberty, equality, or fraternity ! without drinking divers loyal and complimentary toasts were given, to which the English band in attendance, played what they considered appropriate airs. The great and glorious qualities ! of the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV., for example, being, as a matter of course, trumpeted to the air of

our national anthem—the portly patriotism of Louis Dix-Huit, to that of ‘Vive Henri Quatre ;’ the Emperor of Austria’s health, to the ‘Chant des Croates.’ So far so well ; it was only when the Emperor of Russia’s health was given, that these modern Orpheuses were fairly puzzled, till suddenly their leader, quick as thought, exclaimed, “Oh, to be sure !” and struck up, ‘*Green grow the rushes, O !*’

No sooner had the yacht entered the harbour, than my Grand-uncle Paulett dismounted, and in another moment was on board, and had embraced us all round, after which he stood at a little distance from my Aunts, who really did look very handsome, taking off his hat, which he did in a peculiarly graceful manner, and making them a profound bow, he won their hearts by a *coup-de-main*, with the following florid compliment :

“I knew, for I had heard it from all quarters, that I had two handsome nieces, but I had no idea that they had actually monopolized the beauty of half-a-dozen, allowing each of the six to be as well provided as Venus herself.”

The dose was a strong one certainly ; but then, homœopathy had not been discovered, and in the *war*, people were accustomed to any quantum, either of calomel, or compliments, though, it must be confessed, the former enfeebled their constitutions, and the latter their minds.

Sir George then kissed us again ; but poor Grace, always timid, scarcely ventured to look at him, stam-

mered, blushed, and hung her head, while I sprang at once into his arms, returned his caresses with interest, began playing with the aiguilletts of his uniform, and his star of the Bath, and looked him intently in the face when he spoke ; as there is nothing so attractive to elderly persons as the *abandon* and *prévenance* of children, he pronounced me the nicest child that ever was seen ; saying, as he kissed and patted my cheek for the twentieth time :

“ Well, upon my word, I think I have got the nicest little niece that ever was seen.”

“ And I’m sure I’ve got the nicest big uncle that ever was seen,” was my reply ; which riveted the affection with which I had already inspired this dear, kind, and most unselfish of created beings,—the only one whom I have ever known who was really

“ In wit a man, and in simplicity a child.”

But there are natures (few and rare it is true) so loftily noble, so unsulliedly pure, so broadly generous, and so uncorruptibly conscientious, that to praise seems almost to profane ; their own deeds being alone worthy to constitute their panegyric, and embalm their names to the latest posterity ; and such was my Grand-uncle Paulett. Let him then speak for himself, as this narrative progresses, in those manifold series of good Samaritan actions which never belied the deep, pure source from whence they flowed. I may be pardoned

for thus dwelling upon them, in consideration of not only the man, but the type being extinct. We now live in an age of equality and retrenchment ! and verily their Dead Sea fruits, plausible to the eye, but bitter and hollow within, are visible in all things ; for almost every mind of the present day, with the few exceptions that prove the rule, seems to have been retrenched within the narrowest possible bounds, and both private and public aims and ends appear to be all equally low.

Formerly *honour* was the idol men died to obtain, and women to preserve. Now, it is money to which they have transferred their devotions, and for which they are ready to sacrifice their lives. But it is the law nature binds, and therefore we can't sever it ; that from all evil states to good ones, both in the moral and physical world, there must be a state of transition ; and in either this intermediate state is trying, chaotic, and disheartening to the greatest degree. In this state we now are, and therefore must only unselfishly console ourselves with the good that will come, and is rapidly progressing, out of this maze of false positions in which society is at present placed, and which would be truly insupportable did one not religiously believe that finally in all things "out of evil cometh good," just as out of the hideous confusion of chaos God created the immutable order and beauty of the material world. So, in like manner, out of this terrible and monstrous confusion of our social system shall ultimate har-

mony and happiness issue; only, alas! in the moral world.

The finale is long, very long, ere it can be brought about; whereas, in the material world, Omniscience simply *willed* the creation, and it *was*. But it appears to be His pleasure to leisurely and elaborately work out the completion, that is the perfection, of the moral and spiritual world; and even in small things, mankind like a rivulet of running water, reflect the great shadow of this slowly and mysteriously revolving axis of eternity, which for ever through evil, filters good, and through wrong, wrings right.

But to return to my aunts, whose patience would have been sorely tried (had they possessed any, which luckily they did not), had I kept them in reality as long waiting on the deck as I have done in this last page, to say nothing of the injury to their complexions, and the detriment to their silks and satins, single flounced as they were, to contend against the insidious league of the sun and the sea-air combined. However, luckily they were not subjected to any trials of the kind, for my Uncle Paulett, after having condoled with them as feelingly upon the perils and dangers they had braved the first night of their voyage, as if it had not been their own fault, and to the great damage of his yacht, handed my Aunt Marley down the companion-ladder, and up the pier steps, gallantly giving her a *réchauffé* of Turgot's compliment to Marie Antoinette, saying, as he glanced at her verdant feet,

“ Madame l'univers (*l'uni vert*) est à vos pieds !” which my Aunt Marley, judging from his manner that he was paying her a high-flown compliment, only felt the more flattered at, from not understanding it; (a plan that ladies in general, by the bye, would do well to adopt as a rule). One of the sailors in his zeal for my Aunt Bell’s safety, in saying: “ You’d best go down the ladder backwards, Marm ;” and, pointing to it with his pipe, nearly poked the latter in her eye.

My Uncle Charles, dreading from the anger that flashed from his favourite sister’s brilliant orbs, that this *contre-temps* would not end in smoke, with great presence of mind seized that opportunity of purloining the coalheaver’s compliment to the Duchess of Devonshire, and said: “ Never mind, Bell, he only wanted to light his pipe at your eyes.” Whether from a feeling of aristocratic exclusiveness that she did not choose to furnish any such obliging accommodation to a common sailor, or that accidents will sometimes happen even to the best regulated of all fires—vestal ones—I know not; but certain it is, the fire in my aunt’s eyes was at this speech miraculously and suddenly extinguished, and she even smiled and showed her peculiarly fine teeth, without, however, their in the least looking as if she could not bite.

This good humour was increased by an affected fear on her part, which caused her on arriving at it to suspend one of her *Cendrillon* feet over the boat, as if afraid to jump into it, a manœuvre that amply suc-

ceeded, as four pair of eyes—two of which were respectable, and two decidedly handsome—were immediately riveted upon it. The four respectable eyes were the joint property of Mr. Andrew Waltham, the secretary, and Major Macdonald, the brigade-major; the handsome ones belonging to Lord Frederick Farnham, and Captain Dapperwit, the two aides-de-camp.

At length we were all safely landed, when my Grand-uncle Paulett again affectionately welcomed us, a few more compliments—(allusions to Venus rising from the sea, without any specific reference, however, to the particulars of her appearance on that occasion)—constituted part of the ceremony of my aunts being handed into the carriage. After which, each member of the staff who had drawn up their horses abreast, and were waiting *chapeau bas* for that honour, was duly presented to them, Sir George saying, as he exchanged the names of the two aides-de-camp :

“Now, gentlemen, I have nothing more to do with you : I make you over entirely to the ladies, and, if you are guilty of any sins of omission, or of commission, they it is who must bring you to a court-martial.”

“Take care it’s not a court-partial,” laughed my Uncle Charles, which sally made his sisters ashamed of him, and set them blushing ; while he, before he sprang into his saddle, said :

“Farnham, my boy, how are you ? Dapperwit, my

fine fellow, how goes the world with you?" cordially shaking hands with each of them the while; and then, taking his horse from the dragoon, in another moment he was mounted, and the carriage with my two aunts proceeded, followed by Lord Frederick and Captain Dapperwit, who rode on either side of it; my Grand-uncle Paulett, and my Uncle Charles, with the rest of the cavalcade, remaining behind to see us off. Sir George took me up in his arms, and just as he was going to lift me into the carriage, a thin, wizen, sharp-looking, little old man, with keen but sunken dark eyes, grizzled hair, a shabby hat, and still shabbier blue threadbare frock coat, pepper-and-salt trousers, unstrapped, and barely meeting a pair of unpolished highlows, displaying a pair of grey worsted stockings, with a white muslin cravat, which looked as if it had undergone a course of camomile tea for its health, wisped round his throat, old shabby beaver gloves, and a thick bamboo stick, on which he had been resting his chin, and watching our landing, now took off his hat, when my Grand-uncle Paulett turned round, and, shaking hands with him, said:

"Ah! how d'ye do, Belzoni? How is my little friend, Bloom?"

"As blooming as ever—as blooming as ever, my goot Sare George," replied the old man, with a bitter laugh.

"Poor child!" murmured Sir George; and then added aloud, patting my cheek: "You don't deal in

pickles, I believe, Belzoni, or I'd ask you what you'd give me for this one."

" Ah ! my goot Sare George, you know I can't afford to buy noting precious now, since I lose my fortune, and am only poor old Belzoni de beggare."

" Nonsense, Belzoni ; no man is a beggar as long as, like you, he possesses a dutiful and affectionate child, and even one sincere friend ; and that *I* can answer for you having, if not many more."

" No, my good Sare, not many ; for dere are not many Sare George Paulett in de world."

" *Raison de plus* then why you should come and see him oftener ; and at all events let Bloom come, and play with my little nieces here."

" Got bless you, goot man, Got bless you," said the old man, moving rapidly away, without returning any direct answer to the invitation ; after which, my uncle lifted Grace and me into the carriage, and then said something in Irish to Nelly, which had such an effect upon her, that I thought she would never stop curtseying, clasping her hands, and lifting up her eyes to Heaven as if she was praying, while my uncles both laughed ; but when my Grand-uncle Paulett held out his hand to help her into the carriage, with as much *politesse* as if she had been a duchess, it threw her into such a paroxysm of curtseying, gratitude, and wonder, that I thought she never would come to, and only did so at last to utter the remonstrance of—

" Oh, no, indade, Sur George, I cudn't ; it's too

great an honour entirely for de loikes o' me ;" and, resolutely drawing back, she was fain to accept the legitimate assistance of Mole, the footman ; when the door at length closed upon us, and in another quarter of an hour we alighted at the Palladian portico of the Government House, where, if possible, Nelly appeared even more awed at the array of powdered footmen in their white liveries, blue facings, and silver shoulder-knots, blue plush continuations, and immaculate silk stockings, as unwrinkled as "eternal youth," than she had been at the good breeding of my Uncle Paulett. These gentry did not produce the slightest effect upon me or Grace, and I doubt even whether the size of the house and the splendour of its appointments did ; but accustomed as we had been to the "most admired disorder" of the drawing-room at Castle Sedley, the *péle-méle* confusion of our own nursery, and the rack-rent topsy-turvy of the whole house, the intense neatness and order that now surrounded us ; the large, well, not to say elegantly-furnished rooms, that were allotted to us ; the two silent and respectful English maids that waited upon us, only addressing us in an under-voice ; their difficultly suppressed smiles, when Nelly addressed them as "Ma'am ;" and finally, Mrs. Stillingfleet, the housekeeper, curtseying herself into the room in all the propriety of black silk, and the purity of white muslin, to know "if the young ladies wanted anything ?" were too much for our weak nerves. We felt a sort of grandeur of desolation steal over us, and

simultaneously bursting into tears, we hid our faces against Nelly's arm, and almost for the first time thinking of our father, during the excitement of the journey, we sobbed out an inquiry of "When *he* was to come?"

Nelly hushed us in a whisper, for she had not courage to speak out before the fine caps and fashionably-made gowns of the two maids; and even when they at length took their departure, the sofas, hangings, carpets, and wardrobes, seemed to awe her down to a *pianissimo* tone, which, had she been in Parliament, would have rendered her "inaudible in the gallery;" and which so completely wearied, not to say appalled me, that at length, in utter despair at this death-like silence, I boldly walked over to the window which looked upon the lawn, and, clambering up upon the window-seat, knocked my hand through one of the panes, thinking that Nelly would never tamely submit to this, but would shriek out one of her usual reprimands and anathemas against my "unbelieveable bouldness," winding up with the standard anecdote of her son Dermot, which she used always to repeat on such occasions, and which was to this effect,—that when the said Dermot was about four years old, he rejoiced in "the fatal gift of beauty," but added to it so many impish propensities to mischief, that his wise mother had instructed him, whenever either friends or strangers praised his appearance, invariably

to reply to their encomiums, “I *am* a fine boy, but I’m *exthramely bould.*”

But for once I reckoned without my host, for Nelly neither raved nor scolded ; on the contrary, she sank into a chair, covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears ; and when really sorry to see the result of my *ruse*, I ran over to her, and asked “what was the matter?” she said in a voice almost inarticulate :

“Oh, Miss Miriam ! Miss Miriam ! If I hadn’t sin (seen) it with my own two ill-used, and much desaved eyes, I’d niver have b’laved that it was in you to go and breake the windeys, and demolish the house of the good, kind man, that recaved you for all the world like a young quane in it. Och ! weresthrew ! weresthrew ! for all the sun’s so bright, it’s the dark day to me.”

Now that my iniquities were placed before me in this strong light (through the broken pane !), I could not do less than bewail them as bitterly as Nelly herself ; and, therefore, without loss of time, burst into such a roar as I had not executed since I left Ireland, protesting between the *fioriture* of each sob and howl that I loved my good Uncle Paulett with my whole heart, and would not for the world demolish his house, or ever again even break one of his windows. But still Nelly shook her head with the obstinacy of confirmed scepticism, till Grace came to my assistance,

saying, she was sure I had not done it on purpose.

"Oh yes, I did; but indeed, indeed, I did not think about its being Uncle Paulett's window."

"Listen to dat, now, Miss Sedley, and grant me patience! she owns dat she did it on purpose! Oh! murder, murder! but dat makes it worse."

"No it don't, Nelly," said Grace; "for she's told the truth about it. But why did you do it on purpose, Mirry?"

"Not to spoil Uncle Paulett's window—indeed it wasn't; but quite for another reason."

"But what other reason?"

"Why, because—because—it was all so big, and so still, and so stupid here, that I wanted to do something that would make a noise, and amuse us; that was all."

"All! and enough, too. Faix, Miss Miriam, you are a nice sort of a young lady to come into a fine, grand, gintleman's house, and before you've set your fut in it five minutes, go convarting his windexes into musical glasses, for your own divarsion; for I'm sure it aint for anybody's else's!"

Luckily for me, a knock now was heard at the door, and Nelly rose to answer it: it was one of the footmen to announce to us that our dinner was ready; and preceding us, he showed us the way to one of the three rooms dedicated to our use. This suite consisted of a nursery, school, and dining-room, all equally

large and lofty : but we had no sooner arrived at the latter, than poor Nelly found fresh dilemmas and embarrassments awaiting her. Monsieur Vatel, the *chef*, (who, by the bye, boasted with pardonable pride, that he was the *arrière petit fils* of the illustrious *artiste* of the *grand monarque*, that odd fish who had committed suicide upon the non-arrival of a turbot ; and his descendant, was, moreover, on the mother's side, related to the almost equally illustrious Weltjie, the Prince of Wales's *chef*,) a perfect *cordon bleu* ; and had, to *fété* our arrival, sent up a most *recherché* little dinner, and what he considered a most simple one ; namely, a *consommé à la Condé aux quenouillettes de poulet*, some *épigrammes d'agneau*, and a roast chicken. But Nelly, whose ideas of soup for a nursery-dinner, did not extend beyond mutton broth and beef-tea, and only reached up to the old established white, gravy, and mock-turtle, for the consumption of adults, looked with a suspicious eye upon the poor innocent *quenouillettes*, and whispered us not to eat them, as she b'laved they were made of putty—her reason for which belief she confessed at a future period was, the cook being a Frenchman ; and “she knew thim French ate anything, from frogs down to falsehoods.” The *épigrammes d'agneau* were also proscribed, and even the chicken did not escape a suspicious look from her, on account of its water-cress *rus in urbe* ; but she had no sooner began to cut up my dinner for me,

than with an effort of desperation, she did muster courage to say to the formidable footman :

“ If you plase, Sir, I’ll trouble you for a chaney plete ; the silver does be squakeing so,” which so completely routed the gravity of Mr. Mole, that he was obliged to make a precipitate retreat to the door before he could comply with her request ; but strange to say, though he had bolted he still got the plate ; nor did his trials end there, as we were destined further to expose our ignorance, for Nelly’s *début* in “ high life” was not more happy than mine had been in “ the musical glasses ;” and, as we were evidently in a vein of ill-luck, I am convinced we should not have fared a bit better had we attempted “ Shakspeare,” for our next flounder was in “ taste ;” as upon a *Charlotte Russe* making its appearance, and Nelly’s helping us to some of it sparingly enough from her fear of the unknown, I had no sooner conveyed it to my mouth than I let my spoon fall, exclaiming with a terrible face that all my teeth were aching, and begging Nelly to taste it, which she did ; and again turning to Mole, she said :

“ I am sorry to be throubling you, Sir, but would you be so good as to tell the cook not to send up any more shnow puddings, as the young ladies is not used to dem, though indade de shnow here seems very nice ; and it’s a wonder where they get it, and de weather so warum (warm) and bright, and it only de beginning of October.”

This completely finished the greatly-amused Mole, who was glad to make the snow-pudding the medium of his escape ; so removing it, he left the room ; and us resting on our oars, as unwatched children at their meals are apt to do, that is, gracefully leaning forward against the table, our elbows on it, and our shoulders up to our ears, knocking with a sort of castanet measure the backs of our spoons against our lips. In all these little social graces, we were now indulging *ad libitum*, and unreprimanded ; for Nelly was looking round the room, and indulging in the following soliloquy, in which she was almost overheard by her *bête noire*, the tall footman, when he returned with a *macédoine* and some cheese-cakes that were much more to our taste.

"Oh ! to be sure it's all mighty grand, but it's mighty quare, and thim fine sarvants is worse to me nor all de quality ; for one knows what *dat* manes, but how I'm ever to sit down, and ate and drink, and make *fray* (free) wid dese fine sirs and madams, is more den I know."

We so far participated in Nelly's feelings, that it was a great relief to us when the old shawl containing carts, horses, dolls, and crocodiles, was untied previously to Nelly's going down to her dinner, and spread on the floor, for my inspection, with an injunction that I would "be a good child, and stay quite till she came back." I hate self-praise nearly as much as self-righteousness, but still I must say, that could the

reader have beheld Miss Wapsey at this stage of her travels, however cuirassed in the *nil admirari* he might be, he must have acknowledged that it was a fine trait in my character that I should continue to evince towards her such unabated devotion, "let her loveliness fade as it would," and one, which the mere "manly heart with love overflowing" (?) as some war song has it, would be quite incapable of comprehending. This first day at ——— was a failure, as far as the extreme happiness we had anticipated went.

After Nelly's dinner, we walked out about the grounds, which were both beautifully laid out and beautifully situated; commanding here and there, through vistas of the luxuriant foliage, *échappés* of "the dark blue sea" beyond, while from the peristyle of a charming summer-house fitted up after the model of a Pompeian House, to which one ascended by a circular exterior flight of some eighty marble steps, the balustrade of which were green bronze acanthus leaves, intersected with gilt Roman battle-axes. This *Bel Retiro*, or rather *Bellos Guardos*, as it was called, commanded a most extensive and magnificent view of the sea; its furniture was only classical in form, for nothing could exceed the luxurious comfort of the cushions and squabs of its couches, and small Persian carpets counteracted the chilling effects of its mosaic floor, containing the *obligato* 'Black Dog,' and *Cave Canum* in the centre.

Outside each window, instead of *jalousies*, or Venetian blinds, were gilded lattice-work, which could be put back at pleasure. The subject of the fresco on the walls, was the interior of a Lybian temple, with the priests and priestesses in the act of celebrating the rites of Neptune, while devotees were bringing cornucopias of pearl, coral and gold to lay upon the altar. The curtains of this room were of Tyrian purple silk, but of the *real* Tyrian purple, which is a deep orange-red, and they were trimmed with a key border, of royal purple. From the centre of the room was suspended a large bronze Roman galley lamp, and when lit, a flame issued from each oar ; while in the corners of the room stood bronze tripod lamps, about five feet high. There was no fireplace, but in lieu of it a most beautiful antique brazier.

We continued our walk, but with the slowness and solemnity of a procession, as the lawns looked so like velvet, and the gravel walks so like print, that we did not yet like to take the liberty of running on them ; however, familiarity soon ensued, and with it the concomitant contempt prophesied by the copy-books ; for in a week we treated them with no more respect than if they had been so many specimens of Irish bog. But upon this difficulty got over *first day* ; we were not sorry when the walk was ended, and we returned to our bread and milk, that natural element of childhood, till it is exchanged for the milk and water, in which some young ladies, and indeed “*British females !*” in general

delight to float. However, this calm and natural state of things was not destined to last, for the eternal Mole, whom Nelly would not have minded so much had he had the tact to be blind like other moles, but he had not, as the man not only possesssd two great staring eyes, but actually *showed* that he stared with them more than usual at all that she said and did.

He now came to say that we were to go down to dessert, upon which ensued a hasty rummage for the second white frocks of our *trousseau*, which could boast no other merit over those we had on, than the one of not being tumbled; and as Nelly, with that quick womanly perception which she possessed in a pre-eminent degree, instantly perceived how little our costume tallied with the luxury by which we were now surrounded, she grew cross, and began muttering that "it was a sin and a shame, so it was, to bring the poor childer to a place that had such fine ways wid it, and not give them a dacent stitch to put on ; it's long before Mrs. Marley, and Miss Paulett would go and make such an Adam and Ave in Paradise figure of themselves, as they did of dese poor orphan childer. Bad luck to it, for a world, but it would take a dale of good scourging before iver it would be brought to behave itself properly to man, woman, or child." Here the string of the old frock, which being tender itself, should have been treated more tenderly by others, was tied with such a jerk, that it broke, and another had to be

run in in its stead, which did not add to the good-humour of Nelly, who indeed was so thoroughly put out, that the whole order of our toilet had been reversed, for instead of washing our hands and faces first, she had forgotten that necessary preliminary till the frocks were on, when she had to tie a towel round our necks, as if we were going to be shaved.

This similitude was still further increased by Nelly in an absent fit soaping a sponge, and rubbing it round and round our faces, or at least round mine, till eyes, nose, and mouth, were alike saturated with suds ; and most absent she must have been, for if there was any one thing on earth that poor Nelly was proud of, it was our skins and complexions, which she was wont to declare no other country but Ireland could have produced, and which she used to take as much care of as if they had really been what she called them—so much white satin ; however, I should forgive her for this solitary, lavatory barbarity, (which most children in “The War,” were daily subjected to,) as no doubt it was the only means she had within reach of making us smart, and in that, as far as our luckless eyes and cheeks went, she had fully succeeded. But a re-ablution of pure cold water in some degree allayed the pain, and enabled us at last to descend.

Nelly accompanied us as far as the dining-room door, and so dazzled was she at the view of the gold plate on the sideboard as it opened, that she exclaimed

as she retreated into the hall : " Oh ! murder, look at dat now for goold and silver ; sure St. Pather's at Rome can't have more, or de Pope himself can't be grander."

Grace, as usual, walked over to my Aunt Marley, but I wanted no second invitation to go at once to my Grand-uncle Paulett, who possessed that rare talent which might be called *l'esprit du cœur*, the talent of making himself quite as agreeable to children as he was to the wisest and most learned, by the solidity and breadth of his mind, the playful brilliancy of his wit, and the perfect encyclopædia of biography and anecdote, with which his own extensive intercourse with men and things, aided by his quick tact and observation, had stored his most retentive memory ; for to listen to his conversation, was like living over again in an easy-chair the most agreeable portions of the lives of the most agreeable people, with all the angles rounded, and the dross, which *will* alloy even the most brilliant lives, sifted from them ; for he had skimmed the cream of the greater portion of his distinguished contemporaries, and had even seen the setting suns of Burke, Goldsmith, and Johnson, whose glorious rays had not rested upon him in vain.

" For e'en as the tenderness that hour instils,
When summer's day declines along the hills ;
So feels the fulness of the heart and eyes,
When all of genius that *can* perish dies !"

And this tenderness and fulness of heart, seemed to

have penetrated into, and hallowed his whole nature, truly making “to the pure, all things pure;” for although he had been private secretary to George IV. when Prince of Wales, and had, with Sheridan, often “set the table in a roar,” yet had he come out of this contaminating ordeal uninfected, save by the perfect manners of the one, and the exquisite wit of the other. But I am again anticipating. A new member of the house of Paulett now appeared on the horizon, a Sir Joseph Paulett, Knight of the Crescent, and of some Spanish order, for the Pauletts, like divers others in the *War*, were a most *be(k)nighted* family.

Joseph happened, in falling to the lot of this personage, to be one of those *mauvaise plaisanterie* sort of names, with which chance sometimes delights in caricaturing nature, by giving it an antipodal label, such as calling a coquette Constance ; a philanthropist Dionysius ; and this cousin of mine Joseph, who had had innumerable portraits perpetrated of himself in Spain, and mezzotintos therefrom, under the title of Don José Paulett, upon which every one suggested that it should have been Don Juan, except his wife, who was quite content to look upon him as a Joseph. Spain was his hobby ; guerillas, empecinados, and contrabandistas, his chief talk ; and though his name seldom, if ever, figured in the bulletins of the day, innumerable gold Spanish buttons flourished in his waistcoats, and every man in the Peninsula was unanimous in doing him the justice to acknowledge, that he

had taken a great many—pictures, at the siege of Saragossa, and what is better still, had kept them afterwards.

A most disagreeable personage was this said Sir Joseph Paulett, or Don José, as it pleased him to be styled, uniting the charming qualities of tyrant, toady, and tuft-hunter; and such a boaster, in all that either he or his immediate family were concerned, that in the army he had acquired the sobriquet of the *Bragadier*. He had an aquiline, but exceedingly crooked nose, which my aunts, who detested him, used to call his *bar sinister*, for there were certain scandalous chronicles in the family, which stated that his mother had been an opera-dancer, a Signora Fiametta, who, through some inadvertence, had not been married to my Grand-uncle till two years after their son, Don José's, birth. Be this as it might, the exceeding arrogance of this gentleman caused this little informality in his mode of entering into the family to be raked up among his relatives, oftener, perhaps, than it otherwise would have been. *Mais il ne perdait jamais la carte*, as the French say, for his first move on the chess-board of life, was to marry a woman with money, the daughter and sister of an old Cornish baronet, a Sir Christopher Crankie.

She was a good sort of woman enough, only, like all the Crankies, a little, or rather not a little, stingy, which was a providential balance to the extreme lavishness of the Pauletts; but still she got on very well

with them, being one of these negative characters which, like water, amalgamate well with most things. She was, moreover, passively good-natured, and had no confirmed habit, except that of an annual *accouche-ment*; but, as Englishwomen seldom evince their good breeding in any other way, it is perhaps invidious to recur to poor Lady Paulett's "domestic manners." She was for the time being in England; for Sir Joseph was one of those men who always leave their wives somewhere, of course only on account of its not being safe to travel about with one's valuables; but he invariably sealed his letters to her with a brace of birds, I believe a gull and a hawk, tied together, but flying different ways, with the consolatory motto of :

"The further we fly, the tighter we tie."

This was certainly better than drawing the cord too tight at home. However, he was shortly to return to Spain, and then Dosey, (query, *dose*?) as he called his wife, her name being Theodosia, was, with her three sons and daughter, the last of whom was called, not perhaps in the best taste in the world, Fiametta, were to come to—. In continuation, Don José had very large prominent blue eyes, *à fleur de tête*; very straight brown hair, which, nevertheless, was diurnally twisted into one solitary curl on the centre of his forehead, an evident copy from the fore-lock of Time; on each little finger he wore a multiplicity of rings, one large, legitimate-

looking, masculine turquoise, and sardonyx, but all the others, evidently fragile female gauds, proclaiming their own *sous entendu*. Round his throat he also wore a very slender, almost impalpable, short Venetian chain, not longer than a dog-collar, to which was attached a little covey of small, heart-shaped lockets, containing hair; and as there was generally something wrong, either with his collar, or black neck-handkerchief, which required arranging, these precious relics on the shrine of his vanity, were, in settling the former, sure to be, accidentally on purpose, displayed for a couple of seconds to public view, quite long enough to assure the most sceptical of their existence.

It must not, however, be inferred from this, that there was anything sentimental about Don José; oh, dear, no! far from it; for, as he carried off the pictures from Saragossa, so, in like manner, were all his other conquests effected, by a *coup-de-main*, and all his bijouterie and souvenir trophies, seemed to bear the hall mark of *contrabandista*, in indelible characters. Such was his mania for ordering and commanding—a habit no doubt contracted from his military career—that he could not enter any house, even for the first time, and while the owners were strangers to him, without finding fault with everything, and either announcing in the aggregate that everything was in bad taste, or analyzing that opinion by asserting that what was here should be there, in short, that everything required to be elsewhere, and that even what was right

ought to be left, till the miserable host, or hostess, began to feel that nothing indeed would be *right* till he *left*.

From the very first day of our arrival, it was evident that he considered us as interlopers, and between him and my aunts there sprang up, once and for ever, that cordiality and sincerity of hatred, having jealousy for its foundation, and suspicion for its summit, which never flourishes in such perfection as amongst relations, and which is not the less fully appreciated on both sides from being unexpressed on either. To do Don José justice, no one possessed the art of condensing more disagreeable sayings and doings into a small compass, and a short space of time, than he did ; and he soon gave me “a taste of his quality,” for hooking me over to him through the bait of a nectarine : he commenced our acquaintance by asking me, “if I had been to the coachmaker’s to get my face varnished.” The colloquial literature of our language not having yet been enriched with that polite inquiry of “how are you off for soap ?” the poverty of the mother tongue at that time did not enable him to pose the query more tersely, he was therefore compelled to empanel me before a coachmaker, in order to break me a little on the wheel of his inquisitorial fiat.

He next proceeded to a few practical *facetieri*, such as knocking me under the chin, and making me bite my own tongue ; showing me London, which con-

sisted in lifting me up by the head, and nearly dislocating my neck, and finally by giving me some wine; and, while I was drinking it, bobbing my nose down into the glass, which, causing the wine to go the wrong way, nearly choked me. This so exasperated me, that I took that opportunity of practically illustrating the proverb of *in vino veritas* by telling him that he was the ugliest and most disagreeable man I had ever seen in my life. Whereupon a laugh ran round the table, and my Aunt Bell, with a seraphic smile of the most Christian forgiveness, called me over to her to tell me that it was very wrong of me to say such rude things; and to convince me how much more befitting mildness and sweetness were to a young person of my sex, helped me to a *meringue à la crème*, a reprimand which I had not the slightest difficulty in swallowing, but which however I had no sooner done, than I again manifested my ready zeal to become a martyr in the cause of truth; for, pointing across the table at Don José, I heroically exclaimed :

“But he is though, horribly disagreeable, and horribly ugly.”

This was the signal for my aunts to return to the drawing-room, and, till the dining-room door had closed upon us, Bell kept her hand upon my mouth, affecting to be shocked at the terrible things that had issued from it. Lord Frederick Farnham, however, as he got

up to open the door, patted my shoulder, and said, *sotto voce* :

“There’s a good little girl; always tell the truth.”

And my aunts, wisely and judiciously, as they did everything, appealed to each other before me on our way up stairs, asking, “If anything could have been better, or more *à propos*, than my attack upon that detestable, impertinent, and overbearing Sir Joseph.”

Even my Aunt Marley kissed me almost affectionately, when Nelly came to the door for us to go to bed, while my Aunt Bell called out after me :

“Murry, darling, you need not get up before nine to-morrow, if you don’t like.”

Notwithstanding the novelty and excitement of the last twelve hours, and even of my *succès de société* at Don José’s expense, the pleasantest part of the day was its end, when we knelt down to say our prayers, Nelly not forgetting a short sermon about the broken window; and even although it had been announced to us that we were to enjoy another whole month’s idleness, for at the end of that time a French governess, who had been engaged for us, was to arrive from London, yet even the recollection of this month of liberty and pleasure, that is, of sight-seeing, could not make us feel as happy as it ought to have done. Why was this? All around us was better, and brighter, and gayer, than anything we had been ac-

customed to; but as yet it was also strange and unfamiliar. And habit being the harmony of existence, even when we miss *one* of its tones from the register of our lives, all the others jar.

CHAPTER V.

WHILE all sorts of reviews, sham-fights, (and very sham they must have appeared after the real ones they were accustomed to at home), races and regattas were got up in honour of my aunts, we had our own society, and *réunions* in consequence, having been duly introduced to two Miss Abrahams, and twelve Miss O'Donnells, and their four brothers. Their father, an excellent worthy man as could possibly be, was my Uncle Paulett's family physician. He was Irish by birth, and had studied medicine at Paris, before *the French revolution*, I mean the grandmother of all the little Revolutions of the present day—the wicked old lady of 1790, when precipitately returning to England, he had eventually settled at —, where he had got into extensive practice, and married an amiable woman, the result of which marriage had been, what in the

War was denominated a fine family ; which, like Smollett's continuation of Hume, greatly exceeded the original edition, as the worthy doctor himself was only one of six. They were an amiable, united, and thoroughly well-brought up family ; what I mean by that is, their hearts were cultivated, and their dispositions educated—that only real education, or at least the only profitable one. Neither were external accomplishments neglected ; for the eldest daughter, a very pretty and interesting girl of thirteen, who with her brother, a lad of fifteen, had had the very best masters, by which they had duly benefited, and saved their parents future expense, by teaching their younger brothers and sisters ; so that this obligation conferred and received, was an additional bond of unity and affection between them. I don't think my aunts were half as well off in point of society, for the society of all small places being of necessity detestable, because in them we come too near the coarse, daubing, and glaring defects of the scenes of the world's minor theatres, whose actors, too, are more clumsy, and generally either "tear" their "passions to tatters," or else "mouth" them down to the most inane mediocrity. Besides, little people in little places, are essentially *fussy*, attaching the most undue importance to the minutest trifles, and eternally intercepting with their queries, and their wonder, the most ordinary proceedings of their neighbours ; till the luckless natures of a higher calibre, condemned to drag on

their existence among these Lilliputians, begin to feel, as no doubt a poor elephant would condemned to find no other employment for the colossal strength of its trunk than that of eternally picking up pins with it, and those minikin pins into the bargain, —, too, possessed all the vulgarisms and gossippings of a garrison town. Vulgarity is a sort of social malaria, that won't let you escape its baneful effects, even though you should shut yourself up in your house, in the hope of avoiding it. Vulgar people, moreover, are always obtuse, so that the small shot of hints, nay, even the twelve-pounders of insult, glide as ineffectually over them as hailstones over an armadillo. And it is terrible to be fenced round with all the publicity and importance of royalty, without being endowed with its power, or raised to its height ; but only to feel that one cannot wear blue to-day, or black to-morrow, without its exciting as great a commotion in the place, as the losing and finding of Miss Cripps's bag did in "Little Pedlington ;" or that if you dine with Montague, and after that you should, through an impossibility, or any other trifling little impediment, refuse Capulet's "obliging invitation," the latter is ready to consign you to his family mausoleum, without benefit of clergy. There is, too, an adhesiveness about under-bred persons, which threatens to drive Burgundy pitch from the Pharmacopæia, and become patent for Indian postage stamps. Show them common civility in health, or common humanity in illness, and they immediately

"make you liable" for a "friendship," mortgaged with such restrictions and sacrifices, that even Orestes, or Achates, would prefer going through the court to submitting to them.

Among the society at ——, were two Miss Cookes, one tall with certainly handsome features, but so masculine that they were very appropriately framed in a perfect *Beard!* The other was short and dumpy, somewhat awry, and of that luxuriant kind of ugliness which looks as if it had run to seed from neglect. However, they were clever in their way, and possessed certain *talents de société*, which made them rather popular, though Lord Frederick Farnham had branded them with the sobriquet of the *man cook*, and the *plain cook*, which was too good for them ever to lose. They were more especially my Aunt Bell's companions, for she thought either of them a good foil for her own more feminine attractions, when she drove out in her curricles, which she did almost daily, as she piqued herself upon being an excellent whip; for she was what, during the *War*, was called a *dasher!* and the war dasher was the chrysalis of the fast young lady of the present day.

There was a Captain Cooke also, a brother of these nymphs, who being one of those undefined and epicene sort of personages, *qui ne tire pas à conséquence*, did admirably as a sort of Figaro for my aunt. Dapperwit, the other aid-de-camp, not to be outdone by Lord Frederick, had given it as his opinion that Captain

Cooke must have gone round the world for his sister Caroline's ugliness, and taken his sister Janet, with him to beard the bears at the Pole. My Aunt Marley, true to Fourier's system of *les atomes crochu*, also soon contrived to find a congenial eye to hook herself on to. A Lady Laura O'Shindy, a sister of Lord Clanfuddles, who late in life had married a Major O'Shindy, an Irish adventurer in the Commissariat, who finding his wife's small fortune closely tied up, and his brother-in-law not at all inclined to exercise any government influence he might possess in his favour, soon conveyed himself and his whiskers (the only property he could call his own), back to Spain, leaving his bride to give herself up to "General Philanthropy!" the mean wretch never even calling the said General to account for engrossing all his wife's time and affections (no attention, for one cannot give what one has not got), which was lucky, as it enabled Lady Laura and my Aunt Marley to talk universal benevolence by the acre. But it is not in the middle of a chapter that I can attempt a sketch of that great luminary of the age, Lady Laura O'Shindy, from the long-established fact, that her nose alone would require a whole one, as it went even greater lengths than her philosophy. I am in a hurry now, as my aunts have just driven away to a *fête champêtre*, at the other end of the island, and we are to drive to a place called Eagle's Cliff, where Belzoni the old man lives, with whom my Uncle Paulett, shook hands when we landed, to invite his

daughter, Bloom Belzoni, to come and spend the day with us, as all the O'Donnells are coming ; but, before we go, we are to go into the library, as my Grand-uncle Paulett, wants to speak to us.

When we reached the library, Mrs. Stillingfleet was just about to leave it. Don José, who was always writing when he was not railing, was scribbling away for life and death at the table, but at the same time listening to, and looking at, everything ; for his faculties were constructed upon the plan of a many-bladed penknife, with this difference in his favour, that though all were equally as sharp as the knives, he could use all his senses at the same time.

" Well, there's nothing else you think of that would be useful, or that they would like, eh, Mrs. Stillingfleet ? "

" Nothing, Sir George."

" And I hope Fraser has put up the best grapes, and taken care the flowers are choice ones, for he is as stingy about his flowers as if every stem were a Scotch-man, and every leaf a guinea."

" Oh yes, Sir, I've seen to them all myself, and they are all the very best."

" That's right ; now off with you, my good lady, and see them put into the carriage."

And as he opened the door for her, he kissed us, and wished us good morning ; and, lifting me up upon the library-table, said in his merry way, as he drew over a large cardboard box, out of which he took a beautiful

green and white ivory Indian work-box, in which all the implements were mounted in gold :

“ Now, Mirry, I’m going to make an ambassador of you ; do you know what that is ? ”

“ Making a fool of one, I suppose ? ” said I, not liking to appear ignorant.

“ Ha, ha, ha ! not very wide of the mark ; only it is sometimes *vice versa*, and fools are made ambassadors ! ” laughed my uncle. But here perceiving that Grace was standing painfully embarrassed, under Don José’s cold, searching, contemptuous glance, though his pen was still scratching away at railroad speed, Sir George lifted her also up, and seated her upon the table, and then said, affectionately smoothing her hair, under the before-mentioned raspberry tart, cambric muslin, Golgotha : “ Now that Mirry has explained to *you* what stuff ambassadors and *chargé d’affaires* are made of, you understand, Grace, why I did not depute you to execute my commission ; but I want you, for all that, to watch over my little volatile plenipotentiary here, to see that she don’t commit any blunder from inadvertence, for I am sure it would not be from want of feeling. I must therefore warn you, that Bloom Belzoni, the little girl whom you are going to see, and whom I hope you will bring back with you, met with an accident when she was three years old, which has made her quite deformed ; but she has a very sweet face, and still sweeter disposition ; so be sure, Mirry, you do not make any remark, or ask her any questions

about her figure, for now you know all about it, and you would only hurt her feelings, and make her cry.”

“Oh, I’m sure I’ll take care and not do that,” interrupted I.

“And,” continued my uncle, with a deep sigh, “you must recollect never to ask her anything about her mother, especially before her father. She is dead, and the subject is too painful; besides, as a general rule, my dear children, there is nothing so ill-bred as asking questions; what people wish you to know, depend upon it they’ll tell you; and what they don’t, you only make yourself disagreeable by asking; for instance, I’m sure if such a thing *could* happen as that you had been naughty, Mirry—mind, I don’t say that it could, I’m only supposing a case—and that I met you looking very doleful, and your face all blotted with tears, after asking you what was the matter, and you hesitated about telling me, you would not like me to press you,—now should you?”

“No,” said I hanging my head, and growing scarlet, as I pulled my unhappy cambric muslin gloves, the fingers of which were already like funnels, open at the end. “But, though you don’t ask me, I will tell you that I am very bold (Nelly’s word for naughty) for that I broke a window yesterday.”

“I’m very glad to hear it,” said my good uncle, kissing me; “not glad to hear that you broke the window, but glad that you have told me of it of your

own accord ; for though, of course, you would not be so wicked as to tell a lie, yet, as I did not ask you about it, you might have concealed the truth."

"Oh but," said Grace rather indignantly, "is not concealing the truth the same thing as telling a lie?"

" You are right, my good child, to a certain extent, that is concealing the truth about our own misdeeds is worse than telling a lie. It is acting one, which undermines the nature more, as many lies must be both told and implied to act one ; but to know of other people's wrong doings, and be silent upon them is sometimes a virtue, though not always. But I am forgetting your commission ; I wish you to be very kind and civil to old Belzoni. I hope, indeed, you will always be so to every one, but particularly to him ; for he once rendered not only to me, but to the whole of our army, a signal service in Egypt ; he was then in a position to do so, being enormously rich. Since that, poor fellow, he has lost all his fortune, and the world has gone wrong with him in every way ; he is a converted Jew, but as he himself says, has not found as much Christianity among Christians as he used formerly among the Turks ; but unfortunately in this world, wealth is the only thing that elicits the right and universal answer to the question of "Who is my neighbour?" Be rich, and all the world are willing to be your neighbours ; or, even your father, or mother, were you not already provided with those first necessities

of life ; be poor, and those living next door don't know you, and I doubt if in searching the four quarters of the globe, whether you would be able to find such a *lusus naturæ* as even a second cousin, or a Welsh uncle.

" Always, my dear children, like people for what they are, not for what they have. On a selfish principle, this is best ; for any day they may lose their money, but they can never lose their good qualities, if they once possess them ; but even should they not lose their money, they are not likely to give any of it to you ; for money is a thing of which people seem to think they never can (let it accumulate as it will) have too much, or even enough for themselves ; whereas, the good qualities of others, you cannot come in contact with without benefitting directly or indirectly by them.

" But when people are down in the world, it is quite as bad to appear to patronize them, as it is to neglect them ; indeed worse to a proud spirit, for the very sensitiveness, which makes them more susceptible to insult, enables them better to suffice to themselves, and to reject even kindness that has not delicacy for its companion. So mind, Mirry, that you try and treat poor little Bloom exactly with the same sort of frank kindness that you treat your sister Grace, so as not to let her fancy that she is either a stranger, or a dependant ; and give her this work-box with my love, and tell her I am a cunning old fellow, and always give an

apple where there is an orchard ; and, as she marked one set of pocket-handkerchiefs so nicely for me, I shall soon expect her to do me another.

“ My dear uncle,” cried Don José, hastily folding the letter he had been writing, and putting it unsealed into his pocket as he walked over to the side of the table we were at, “ if you will allow me to say so, I think that work-box much too good for a girl like Bloom Belzoni ; and I think I should like to buy it, and send it to Dosey, if you will let me, and give Bloom a commoner one.”

“ You may get your wife one like it, if you please ; for I have no doubt Du Barry has more of them,” said my Uncle Paulett. Du Barry was the Howell and James of —. “ But,” continued he, “ you must excuse my sending a shabby one to poor little Bloom, for giving trumpery presents to those who are badly off I look upon as the worst species of bad taste, and bad feeling, for it is going out of one’s way to remind them of their poverty. But it seems to me, that you are strangely altered, my dear Joseph,” concluded my uncle, taking a pinch of snuff, and looking most ironically *naïve* at his nephew ; “ for at Cairo, you used to think nothing good enough for Belzoni ; for even that magnificent Arab that poor Abercrombie gave me—Selim, don’t you remember? you made me give him to Belzoni : and though Bloom was then only an infant, I recollect your borrowing a hundred sequins from me, to give her a gold cup,—

by the bye, my dear Joseph, I do not so clearly recollect whether you ever repaid them ?”

Don José bit his lip, slightly shrugged his shoulders, as though he should say, “what a pity my poor uncle is such a fool ;” or it might mean, “what a pity it is that he cannot rest satisfied with being a fool to his nephews and nieces ;” or, as “brevity is the soul of wit,” it may have meant, “why can’t he confine his *donna mania* to his nephew Joseph ?” But, whatever were his thoughts, his words were :

“Why, my dear uncle, at that time Belzoni was the right arm of our troops in Egypt; and after his almost miraculous rescue of our convoy in the desert, I know it was Abercrombie’s wish that every officer in the corps should evince their sense of Belzoni’s services in the best way they could.”

“And do you think, Joseph, that services—especially such services—rendered to human beings, are like frescoes on a whitened wall, which a little time and a few storms can obliterate? I don’t, at all events I can never forget, that after the battle of Alexandria, a few hours before his death, as I was sitting beside him in his tent, poor Abercrombie said to me : ‘Do you know, Paulett, I ought to have been your father, for I was in love with your mother for years: now that she is where all angels ought to be—in Heaven—I may tell you this; so fancy me your father, and attend to my dying injunction: Never forget the obligations we are under to Joel Belzoni ; he is richer

than any of us, so that he don't want this world's good things; but sincerity of friendship is what the richest cannot purchase, so give it to him, George, and with it my blessing, which, with my sword, is all I have to leave you either.' Therefore, my dear Joseph," concluded my uncle, as the tears welled in his eyes, "you don't suppose I am likely to neglect Belzoni, or to send cheap insults to his child."

"Oh! very well, my dear uncle," said Don José, hastily buttoning his surtout, as he prepared to leave the room, "I'll get another work-box for Dosey at Du Barry's." And indeed, to do this *mari modèle*, justice, he made many liberal presents to his family from the same emporium; but somehow or other, through successive little oversights in his financial arrangements, all such invariably went down in my Uncle Paulett's account. When we reached the hall, Don José was still lingering there, putting on his gloves; and, as we crossed it, he made a snatch at the work-box I was carrying, saying:

"Just let me look at that, child."

But instead of complying with his request, I thought it my duty, after all I had heard, to refuse, and grasp it more tightly; which I did with a hasty "No, I can't," and a quick turn round to Nelly, against whom I leant the work-box as against a wall of defence; and, upon his attempting still to possess himself of it, I set up such a scream, that it brought my Uncle, Paulett, out of the library; whereupon Don José made

a precipitate retreat down the hall door steps into the lawn, merely saying by way of parting compliment :

“ What a disagreeable little wretch it is ! ” To which Nelly muttered, as she followed, lifting me into the carriage :

“ Och ! din, its meself dat doesn’t like a cross bone in your ugly schkin, and if it wasn’t worse look (luck) dat Dermot rints de cabin and de bit of ground from ye, and dat de pig on dat account does be obligeed to look up to you as his natcherel (natural) purtector, its little shivitylity you’d get from Nelly Bawn, Sur Joseph Paulett, for all you tink yourself so grand wid your crooked nose, and straight hair, and your ninety-nine gross of rings sufficient to draw all de curtains dat ever was made, and lave enough afther to ring all de pigs’ schnouts dat ever was born.”

CHAPTER VI.

ABOUT an hour and a half's drive along an upper road, that overlooked the sea and the beach, through the exhilarating air of a fresh, crisp, autumnal breeze, brought us to Eagle's Cliff; and indeed it was well-named, for on a rock in a small creek, or bay, stood a solitary turret, or tower, of what appeared to have been formerly a castle, while the waves laved its basement, which contained one massively-grated, prison-looking window. The upper stories were gained by a flight of nearly four hundred granite steps, much broken and indented, but triumphing over their decay, like unto good deeds and fine thoughts which outlive the dead: here and there, through their crumbling fissures, burst luxuriant tufts of wall-flower, wild thyme, and piletary of the wall.

In order to arrive at this tower, it was necessary to

alight at the main road, and descend a few steps that led to the beach, from whence Eagle's Cliff was not above a hundred yards walk, but in bad weather, or at high tide, it could only be gained by a boat. Although on this, our first visit to it, the sea was particularly blue and calm, and the sun peculiarly bright, strange to say, Jeffs happened to be floating about round the little bay, like Robinson Crusoe, all by himself; not exactly upon a raft; but in a boat in which he was occasionally standing up and looking towards the road, as he pushed the skiff nearer the landing by resting an oar against the side of the rock that formed the foundation of the tower. While he executed this manœuvre, his tail (for in those days every government *employé* was tailed, and not *cur-tailed*, as they are now,) his tail, I say, with sympathetic ardour, elongated itself in horizontal rigidity in the opposite direction, as if scornfully pointing at a world upon which its owner turned his back.

“ Oh ! look Nelly,” cried I, “ there’s Jeffs—”

“ Well, and sure if it is, why would I luck (look) at him, Missh Miriam—or you aither (either). I suppose he’s about his business, or if he isn’t, let him go about it, and fair weader afther him ; so walk on, Missh.”

“ But look, Nelly, he’s getting out of the boat now, for he sees us.”

“ Whisht ! now didn’t I bid you walk quite and mannerly on, Missh Miriam ; a purty ting indade, for

a young lady like you to be lucking (looking) afther boats and boatswains."

And so intent was she upon lecturing me, that she had quite forgotten to keep up an equally strict *surveillance* with regard to Grace, who now left to her own devices, turned round and said :

"Ah ! how d'ye do, Jeffs ?"

"Bravely, I thank you, Miss ; hope you and all the family's quite well," replied Jeffs, hat in hand ; and advancing a few steps after the flying Nelly (who, owing to the brown beaver bonnet, did not look as like Atalanta as she otherwise might have done,) he said, with a scrape of his right foot, and his hat held by the rims in both hands, as if he had been soliciting alms at a charity sermon, "yer servant, Mrs. Bawn ; I thought praps as the young ladies might like to return by water, and as I've nothing particklar to do, I could wait for them."

"No nade in life of your giving yourself that throuble, Misther Jiffs, as I niver heard of any one's preferring the say to the dhry land, unlessh it was soals and shailors, maybe."

Poor Jeffs walked slowly away, looking much hurt, but whether at Nelly's curt refusal, or at her having given such particularly flat fish as *soals* the precedence of sailors I know not ; but, touched with remorse for her ungraciousness by his blanks looks, Nelly turned round, and cried after him :

" You'll undershtand Mister Jiffs, if you plase, Sur, that we're very much obleeged to you all de shame (same).

Jeffs turned and paused an instant, as if endeavouring to understand it, but receiving no further explanation from Nelly, he seemed unable to do so; and therefore again continued his way leisurely and despondingly back to the boat, a sort of amphibious Othello, whose "occupation was gone;" while on the contrary ours was about to begin, and rather an arduous one it was, ascending those three hundred and eighty-two steps; and as Nelly was to carry the work-box, I suspect she repented her summary dismissal of Jeffs before we got half way, so closely does punishment follow on the steps of error; however, Nelly did seem to consider the matter in this light, as she merely remarked after having announced that "de back was dropping out of her;" that "it was long before men would ever be in de way when dey cud be of any use, but so it had bane since de world began, instead of being dere convanient to dhrive away de devil, like a man; sure Adam, de cowardly spaldeen, came up in time to go and tell on his wife, and lay all de blame on her (bad luck to him) whin she had taken a bite of de apple, dough I've no doubt he tuck (took) de biggest half, or he was very different to all de men he's left afther him, if he did not, as dey always take care to have de lion's share of any devarshin dat's

going ; but whin it comes to paying de piper, it's de poor women dat's left to do it."

Arrived at length at a little garden, blooming and well cultivated, which brought us to the last story of the tower, and which, being several hundred feet above the level of the sea, commanded a most magnificent and boundless view, we stood still to admire and to take breath before we pulled the deer's foot attached to an iron chain at one end of a black-nailed Gothic door, the chief entrance of Belzoni's habitation. Not only the porch, but all this part of the turret, was completely covered with the finest and freshest broad-leaved ivy I ever saw ; and with the little garden, filled with rare flowers and some exotics, gave an air of home and comfort to this naturally desolate and isolated spot that was a perfect triumph of cultivation. All round the wall overhanging the sea were green tubs, with orange, and lemon and pomegranate trees now in full bloom, the second they had put forth that year ; the sea-breeze delightfully counteracting that voluptuous weight of atmospheric pressure which is so overpowering in Italy. We were still admiring this little world of enchantment, hanging as it were in the air like some impromptu fairy territory, when Nelly, clasping her hands, burst into the following soliloquy :

" Och ! but it's dis dat would have bane de iligant place to show Terrence to Fader Abraham, rest his sowl !

(soul) all the same," and here she crossed herself devoutly.

" What do you mean, Nelly, by showing Terrence to Father Abraham ? Wasn't Terrence your husband ?" asked Grace, opening her eyes into wide notes of interrogation.

" He was, Missh, worse look (luck) ; but what I mane by showing him to Father Abraham is by raison of what Judy McManus—a mighty cute knowledgeable ooman—used to say to me, whin yare afther yare Terrence would be dead drunk, widout having de last notion of dying in ra-ality.

" ' Nelly, 'ooman,' she used to say, ' de fact is, dat Father Abraham forgetting dat man of yours, and small wonder whin Terrence do be always forgetting himself; now sorrow a rid you'll iver git of him, unless you do someting to give Abraham a hint about him, to get his *buzzum* ready.'

" ' How would I do dat, Judy ?' says I.

" ' Ye know de third big mountain out beyond Connemara, called de Devil's Gazabo ?' says she.

" ' I b'lave ye, Mrs. McManus,' says I.

" ' Well,' says she, ' my advice to you is just to git Terrence to de top of it some day, and show him to Father Abraham, dats all, and lave de rest to Providence.'

" And I don't doubt but Judy was right, only it was six long miles to de Devil's Gazabo from our place, and dere was no such ting as iver getting Terrence to do a

hap'orth aither for his own good or mine, so deuce a fut would he go, and de consequence was, that I niver got shut (quit) of him for foore (four) year after Judy first let on to me about de Gazabo."

With this edifying little anecdote, Nelly re-pinned her shawl, with that air of retrospective resignation which is always both easy to achieve and graceful to assume when we allude to past misfortunes. And, pulling the deer's foot, "the prest" bell, not "watch," "returned a silver sound;" and in a few minutes an old woman, clean, but crabbed, answered our summons, when Nelly said :

" If you plase, Ma'am, does de gentleman wid de outlandish name be living here ?"

The woman stared, as well she might, and seemed half inclined to resent an query, till Grace said :

" Is Mr. Belzoni at home ? and if he is, will you have the goodness to tell him that we come from Sir George Paulett : but it's Miss Belzoni that we want to see."

The Cerberus, with a high-crowned cap, now seemed a little mollified and re-assured, but still she was by no means lavish of her civility ; and eyeing us from head to foot, she merely said, in an execrable *patois* :

" Par daing restez-z ; j'en vais voir."

Which we did not comprehend at the time, but understood by her pantomime of putting out her hand to defend the entrance, that we were to remain where we were till she had inquired whether we were to

be admitted. In a few seconds, Belzoni himself appeared, not in the old blue frock-coat, but in a Turkish dressing-gown and slippers, and an embroidered velvet *calotte* on his head, which, however, he immediately took off, and made us a series of profound bows; but Grace walked forward and shook hands with him, while I ran up and kissed him: the tears came into his eyes.

“Chère petite,” said he, returning my kiss, and then added in broken English: “and how is my good Sare George?”

“He is quite well, thank you,” replied Grace; “and said we were to give you his kindest regards, and ask you if you would allow your daughter to come and spend a few days with us?”

“Ah, she shall be ver happy; but I must tell you, my dear little girls, she has not de good fortune to be as pretty and as straight as you, so I am sure you will have—”

“Oh,” interrupted Grace, colouring deeply, “Uncle Paulett told us all about her, and what a sweet face she has, and what a good girl she is, and that Mirry and I were to love her as if she was our sister.”

“Dear soul! he never forgets any ting dat can save pain, or give pleasure,” murmured Belzoni, passing his hand over his eyes; and then taking one of ours in each of his, he led us to the end of the narrow oak,

wainscoted passage we were in, when, throwing open a door, we found ourselves in a large circular room, the walls of which were covered with much-worn brown and gold arras. The floor was of polished oak, with a large but faded Turkey carpet in the centre ; the high-backed Elizabethan chairs were also covered with leather, but sadly in want of repair. In the centre of this room, was an immense octagon oak-table, inlaid with quaint carvings, pourtraying scenes from the Commonwealth, amongst others, that of Cromwell suddenly entering, and finding his chaplain on his knees to Lady Claypole, who thus caught in the fact, said he was soliciting the hand of one of her women ; whereupon Cromwell, naught deceived, grants his request, by ordering the woman to be brought in, and the marriage to be celebrated on the spot.

Instead of a claw, or legs, this curious old table was supported by the trunk and roots of an oak, polished, however, the branches of which, being in bold relief, spread out under the table, and with their acorns came up round the sides. In the recess of a deep mullion-window, which overlooked the sea, was another oak-table, but square, with four twisted legs, and over this one was a faded Persian carpet, on which rested some books, a round work-basket, full of plain work : and, at the opposite side, a small oval embroidery-frame, in a swing-stand, like that of a looking-glass, in which was a half-finished piece of white satin embroidery, and beside it,

a cup of the real old ruby glass, full of exquisite flowers, which had evidently been sitting for their pictures to the embroidery frame.

Round this window were cold, slanting, narrow window-seats, with cushions of faded red damask ; the hangings which projected into the room, round this window, were of the same material, but in a still more dilapidated condition, the blinds of the high latticed windows being of a sort of purple bunting, such as flags are made of. Over the high carved mantel-piece, divided in the centre, in a triangular form, by the meeting of two carved palm-trees, was an old Venetian glass, from which the quicksilver had departed in several places, giving it a most variegated appearance ; across it were placed two Turkish sabres, a yataghan, and a halo of costly, and curiously-mounted pistols ; above these, again, were several *narguilés*, or pipes, slung straight across, like fowling-pieces.

Opposite the chimney-piece was a large old hard arras-covered couch, with another square oak table before it, upon which were placed two of the most exquisitely-beautiful shrubs I ever saw ; one was of a bright and vivid purple, growing out of an immense shell, which had been so richly gilt, that it looked like a mass of solid gold ; the other was growing out of the same sort of shell, only silvered over instead of gilt, and this plant had a most spray-like, feathery leaf, of pistachio green, with delicate maiden-blush-looking

flowers. As I could not help making an exclamation of admiration and delight before these floral marvels, Belzoni explained to us, that the beautiful purple flower was called the *Flor de Queresmo*, a shrub, which is a native of, and peculiar to Rio Janeiro; and, as for the shell in which it was planted, he had picked it up himself many years before, on the Sicilian coast, and therefore called it the *Concha d'oro*, which was the reason he had gilt it, that it might the better deserve its name.

The delicate shrub, in the silver shell, was an off-shoot of that beautiful Chinese tree, the *yulan*. At one side of this sofa was a door, now ajar, which opened into a small room, containing an iron bedstead, a black leather covered office-table, with a range of small drawers and pigeon-holes, filled with parchments, and tape-tied papers, on one side of it, while against the wall was to be seen a large iron bureau, ribbed and nailed, with all sorts of curious and impregnable locks; the sort of chest, in fact, in which bankers keep papers and money. Belzoni now pushed-to this door, and crossing the room, opened one that stood opposite to it and said :

“ Bloom, es-tu là ? viens ici, Loulou, voir de petites amies ; viens, vite, elles t’attendent.”

“ Toute suite, mon père,” answered a very sweet voice from within.

A few minutes after, a young girl of about fourteen, with one shoulder so much higher than the other that she looked as if she had been stooping down on one

side to pick up something, entered the room ; but though her figure had sustained this unfortunate injury, beauty was not to be banished from the home it had selected. Bloom Belzoni's face was almost as lovely a one as could haunt a poet's dream. A profusion of rich brown Titian-like hair was plainly wreathed in burnished masses round her classically-formed head, and parted on a forehead high and smooth, and of pearl-like whiteness, not concealing two ears so delicately white and small, that they looked as if they ought to have been kept in a casket. The low, straight, pencilled eyebrows, surmounted by large, almond-shaped, sleepy eyes, of that deep, soft, refracting, luminous, dark-green, so rare and so beautiful, that when, as in the case of Bloom Belzoni, it is fringed with long dark lashes, it reminds one of the sun piercing through forest foliage, or light playing at hide-and-seek with darkness. Her nose was small, and of the delicate chiselling and transparent tints of a cameo, blending into an upper lip and full red-budding mouth of perfect beauty, which did not quite close upon the small pearly, and slightly, very slightly projecting teeth within it. The face was of the most Madonna-like oval, pale, when in repose, but with every passing emotion mantling with downy peach-bloom tints, and stirred like some still lake with a passing breeze. The small, round, ivory throat was also worthy of the beautiful head and lovely face that surmounted it ; a face which possessed in the fullest

degree what Napoleon, in one of his letters to Josephine, calls that *physionomie douce et mélodieuse*, which he complained of the Milanese beauties wanting, and which, adds he, tenderly, *est si bien gravée dans mon cœur!*—in short, Lord Byron's

“The mind, the music, breathing from the face!”

without which there is no beauty, and with which there can be no ugliness.

Bloom, who wore a white muslin frock and a black silk scarf, and who carried her plain straw bonnet in her hand, as if she had just come in, coloured when she saw us, and seemed labouring under the slight embarrassment which the consciousness of her deformity always occasioned her in the presence of strangers. But, as there are few better judges of beauty than children, and few upon whom it more powerfully exercises its autocratic privilege of attraction, we ran forward to meet her, and with the *sans gène* of our age, told her in a very few words how beautiful we thought her. She returned our kisses in the most affectionate manner ; but when I was again beginning to tell her, for the twentieth time, how beautiful I thought her, she put her hand over my mouth, and said :

“Hush, my dear little girl—no one can be beautiful—deformed as I am ; however, it is God's will, and so I don't complain.”

“I wish it was His will to make me like you, then,

for I think you are the prettiest girl I ever saw in my life," replied I, returning to the charge with true childish pertinacity.

"My dear child, you must not say such things," said Bloom, raising her beautiful eyes, now filled with tears, "you must not indeed; on the contrary, you ought to thank God that you are straight, and not an object to be pointed at."

What I most understood in this, was the tear in poor Bloom's eye; and, fearing I had done the very thing I had been cautioned against, and least meant to do, namely, hurt her feelings, I was both sorry and ashamed; and standing on the points of my feet, and trying to throw my arms round her neck, I said:

"All I meant to say was, that I love you; don't say it is wrong to do that, because Uncle Paulett told us we *were* to love you, and besides, I can't help it."

"Oh, no, that's not wrong, it's kind of you and of your good uncle, who is always kind; and I think I shall soon love you both as much as I do him," said Bloom, kissing us, as the tears streamed down her cheeks.

"You must not cry, Bloom," said I, tearing, without fear of Nelly, from the tape-tied loop which attached it to the side of my petticoat, my own pocket handkerchief, "a solid square," about the size of a D'Oyley, of coarse lawn, which, but for the honour and glory of the thing, and the charming little lilac border,

that meandered all round it, might have been called linen at once, and with it drying her tears, “for if you cry, you won’t be able to see what Uncle Paulett has sent you; and he said I was to give it to you with his best love;” (and here I went over to the chair upon which I had deposited the work-box on entering,) “and what else was it he said about his being an old fox, Grace?”

“Nonsense, Mirry,” interrupted Grace, quite as much embarrassed as if I had been dealing out original opprobrious epithets, in speaking of our dear good uncle. “Nonsense, he only said that Miss Belzoni had marked him some handkerchiefs so nicely, that he hoped she would soon mark him some more; and he sent her this work-box, because he was so much obliged to her.”

“Oh, how beautiful!” cried the delighted Bloom, her eyes sparkling at the delicate chasing of the scissors, thimble, *étui*, and winders, which were embossed in a sort of green gold, but not enamel, “Regardez, mon père, comme c’est beau!” added she turning to her father.

“En effet, mais pas si beau que le naturel de celui qui te l’a donné.”

“Ah! ça, c’est vrai,” rejoined Bloom; after which, her father said to her in English:

“Where have you been, Bloom, dat you have your bonnet?”

"I had only been to see poor Pharaoh, whom I don't think is at all well, as he won't eat."

"Ah, ha; dat remind me I shall show you my littel dears, my oder children, while Bloom is getting ready to go wid you."

"What have you more children? I'm so glad! And may they go back with us too?" said I.

"I am afraid you will not find my oder childrens any great *agrément* to your *société*," replied Belzoni, smiling; "however, you can ask dem if dey shall like to go?"

And so saying, he led the way through the room out of which Bloom had just come, and which was her bedroom; and, unbolting a double door at the other end of it, we descended four or five steps, which brought us out upon a sort of bastion in the port-holes round which cannon were planted, while at one end of it stood a granite pyramid, about four feet in height, with an entrance to which was attached an iron ring and chain, which at Belzoni's approach began to rattle, and presently the occupant of the pyramid, a large eagle, emerged from it, and began to flutter his wings in token of recognition. At either side of this domicile strutted two other birds, who looked, from the arduous manner in which they were scratching and scraping a load of sand, laid down apparently for the purpose, as if having heard of the eagle's indisposition, they had come to write their names down at his palace door. One was an albatross,

white and stately, measuring at least ten feet from the tip of one wing to that of the other. The second bird was black as night, and was a kuril, or species of peterel. The albatross was called Isis, and the kuril, Osiris.

"So, poor old fellow, you are not well? What, you sigh, I suppose, for de land of Egypt, and are tired of de house of bondage, like your master, eh, Pharaoh?" caressing the eagle, who kept rubbing its beak against his hand, twisting its head in every direction, and making a curious gurgling-moaning sort of noise, as if hypochondriacally trying to express how much he needed all the condolence that a generous sympathy could offer him. During this *tête-à-tête* between Belzoni and the eagle, the petrel and albatross began impatiently flapping their wings, screaming, and resorting to every possible means to excite that share of attention which they considered their due. This was, to say the least of it, an unreasonable attempt at monopoly; for, were every one to be attended to at the same ratio, that is, according to his own standard of his personal claims to attention, there really would not be sufficient of that commodity left in the world to supply the demand of even one tithe of its present inhabitants.

"Well, well, Mrs. Isis—all in good time, and your black brother, too; how you do, both?" asked their master: and so saying, he walked over to a sort of tank and took out of it an immense ormer, and open-

ing it with a sort of oyster-knife, that appeared to be kept there for the purpose, he divided the tough contents between Isis and Osiris, who swallowed it as delightedly as a pair of antiquated beauties would have done an extorted compliment; after which, Belzoni gave the beautiful shells to us.

"And do they never fly away?" asked I, seeing that they watched him more like dogs than birds.

"You shall see," said he; and then again going up to the eagle and rubbing his head, he said:

"Don't you want to hear news of the Corsican eagle, eh, Pharoah? *Gr-r-r-redin de Corse?*"

And the bird again made a strange noise, as if answering his master, who then turning to the petrel and albatross, that were both intently watching him and bending their heads, first to one side and then to the other, as if literally awaiting his orders, he said:

"His Majesty, King Pharoah, desires to hear news from de French eagles; so, like dutiful and liege subjects as you are, see if you can meet wid any birds from dat country in de higher regions of air. Away, begone! but tarry not one hour longer dan twelve tomorrow;" and clapping his hands, away flew the birds, as obedient to the word of command, as if they had the benefit of a two years' drill in a crack regiment, or had graduated at some college of jugglers, and there taken a Master of Arts' degree.

"And will they really come back?" inquired Grace and I, in a breath, much astonished.

“To the minute,” said Belzoni, “and I hope you will come back, too, and then you will see dem; but now we had better go and have some fruit, while Bloom is getting ready; so, good-bye, Pharaoh. *Au revoir, mon ami, voici un orange,*” added he, taking a small Maltese orange out of his pocket, and giving it to the eagle, “*et, quant à la politique, tachez d'en tirer parti, et, puis jetez l'écorce!* ha, ha, ha!” and, delighted with this sarcastic mot, he once more took us by the hand, and led us round the bastion, till we reached another door, opposite to the one by which we had come out, and which opened into his own apartment, the identical one, the inner door of which I had seen ajar in the sitting-room, to which we now returned, and where we found three round old Dresden china baskets full of delicious nectarines, large black figs, fine muscatel grapes, and a box of sweetmeats, made at the convent of Santa Maria Novella, at Siena, of whose incomparable quince tablets I to this day retain a grateful recollection.

Neither was there any lack of divers choice wines, some in rare Venice glass flasks, and some in quaint burley bottles, draped in venerable cobwebs, as if trying to preserve an incognito against any accidental meetings with the monks, or burgomasters, whose vassals it was evident they had once been. Bloom had not yet completed her arrangements, so that we had full time to do justice to all these good things, with the exception of the wines, which we were too young to

appreciate, as wine, like wit, has no attraction for those who have no relish for it. Belzoni was in the act of pouring me out a glass of water, when we were nearly electrified by a loud peal of the door-bell, and, in another moment, we had the pleasure of hearing Don José's dulcet voice, asking Caramel, Belzoni's old woman :

“ Why the deuce her master did not have an awning of some sort put up at that cursed door, as the sun darted down upon it enough to scorch a salamander ? ”

To which the old woman graciously replied :

“ Then all who are not salamanders would do well to keep away from it ; and you had better be the first to set them the example.”

Such was also her master’s opinion, if one might judge from the smile that played round his mouth, and the intense *gusto* with which he inhaled a pinch of snuff after he had listened to his hand-maiden’s, or rather his hand-madam’s reply, for the fair Caramel had been twice married.

“ Why you little monkeys,” cried the well-bred Sir Joseph, now strutting into the room, and thus apostrophizing us before he took any notice of our host. “ I should have thought you would have been at home half-an-hour ago.” Then holding out one finger to Belzoni, without waiting for any invitation on his part, he drew a chair close to the table, flung himself into it, and seizing a tumbler held it up to the light to ascertain that it was perfectly clean. Grasping one

of the before-mentioned quaint-looking bottles, he poured out a tumbler full of its contents, and finally draining it, he performed a *charade en action* of a note of admiration, by clicking his tongue against the roof of his mouth, and requesting he might be shot if it was not the finest hock he had ever drunk in his life—“ ‘Pon my word, I should be afraid to say how much of that wine I could take.”

“ Any *given* quantity, I suppose,” said Belzoni, slyly.

But Don José was not the man to be either abashed or turned aside from his purpose by a sarcasm, however keen; so he merely said coolly, as he replenished his glass,—

“ If you have more of this wine than you want, Bel, I’ll take it off your hands.”

“ I have not a single bottle more dan I want, and I’ll not trouble you to take any more to-day, Sare Joseph, as it is not yet two o’clock; and in your kind zeal to relieve me of de *débris* of my cellar, I fear you shall give yourself a head-ache, and den you know, *bon gré, mal gré*, you would be *la mauvaise tête de la famille*—ha ! ha ! ha !”

But still Don José did not acknowledge, and therefore could not resent, any of Belzoni’s inuendoes, for no man possessed in a more eminent degree than he did, that peculiar sort of discretion, which has been so truly denominated “ the better part of valour.” This it was, which amid all “ the glorious pomp and circumstance

of war," in the Peninsula, had prevented his ever rashly "seeking reputation at the cannon's mouth," and made him prefer rather to seek it at that of some fair Andalusian; this too it was, which more even than his habitual modesty led him, many years after, to suppress his name, when with the practical results of a long experience, he enriched the scientific literature of his country with a great work, though little book, entitled, "The Art of breakfasting abroad, and of never Dining at Home," knowing full well, that in England the scripture invocation of "Oh! that mine enemy had written a book!" seems to be strangely enough interpreted by society at large into "Oh! whoever writes a book is mine enemy." Don José, therefore, having sufficed to himself, during many a more important crisis, it was not likely he should prove inadequate to a skirmish of his own seeking with an old man of ruined fortunes, though it would appear, from the tone of his subsequent conversation, that it was to ascertain the exact state of those fortunes, and the precise degree of probability there might be in retrieving them, that had super-induced his present friendly visit. So looking round the room, and probably imagining we had left it, from the fact of our having retreated as far as possible from this great man into the recess of the window, he gave three sonorous hems to bespeak attention to the importance of his budget, and drew his chair some paces nearer to that of Belzoni, and said, assuming the air of a Socrates, (with the wisdom left out,)

“ Now, my dear Belzoni, if you would open your mind, and explain to me exactly how your affairs stand, one might see one’s way, and be able to help you.” Here an indescribable expression of haughtiness flashed for a moment over Belzoni’s face, but mastering himself with an evident effort, he bit his lip and said nothing, and the great man continued : “ Now, my dear fellow, I am not talking *en l’air*; I am going to London, and as I really think you have some claims upon our Government—”

“ The more claims one may have upon the English Goverment the less one may expect from it,” interrupted Belzoni ; “ flimsy continental Governments, that cannot boast such a constitution, evince a most ignorant admiration for men of talent, and a plebeian gratitude which rewards the slightest service rendered to their country, with pensions and decorations ; in England, the Government is wiser, and repays the greatest non-ministerial, or non-military public services with *crosses* only, or—promises !”

It was remarkable that in this speech, which he had uttered with considerable excitement, Belzoni had totally discarded the foreign accent and mispronunciations which he generally assumed.

“ Well, my dear fellow,” returned Don José with a deprecatory, yet forgivingly forbearing shrug, as if he had identified his own dignity with that of the Government, and said, “ it is beneath us to resent this ; let us leave the Government, my dear Belzoni.”

"With all my heart," again interrupted the latter, "since it seems constructed upon the model of the Cretan Jupiter without ears ; and for the same reason I suppose that one of the ancient mythologists assigns in the case of the statue, namely, that Jove, as governor of the universe, whose care ought to be for every one, should not be suspected of being particularly attentive to any individual."

With another shrug, more compassionate than the former, Sir Joseph, for the third time, returned to the charge :

"I was not alluding to your claims upon the Government, though I acknowledge them." (This must have been most consolatory to Belzoni, considering the unity that Don José seemed to have established between the Legislature and himself). "But to a private and much more certain channel of retrieving your affairs ; if they are retrievable, I am acquainted with a solicitor, a monstrous clever fellow, who undertakes the clearing off of encumbered estates, hastens the foreclosing of mortgages (if desired), and leads forlorn hopes in the recovery of bad debts, for the most part with unexampled success."

"Indeed!" broke in Belzoni, pausing in the act of taking a pinch of snuff, as if seized with sudden and intense interest. "And pray what may the name of this phœnix be?"

"Barnivelt."

"So—" half articulated Belzoni, and then added,

looking his companion through to the very marrow,
“ And do you know much of this Barnivelt ?”

“ Personally no ; but a friend of mine, Dingly Vasavour, whom though he passes for a *millionnaire*, being a gambler, is occasionally hard up, says Barnivelt is a trump, and gets him money when no one else can or will ; for I suppose it is that.”

Here an appalling change came over Belzoni’s face ; his eyes actually revolved like those of a person under the influence of epilepsy, but the convulsion was only momentary ; he poured out a glass of water, and having drunk it, he set his teeth tightly, interlaced his hands, as if he had been twisting a serpent in his grasp ; and this short paroxysm over, said with the most perfect calm, as if he had been merely remarking what a fine day it was :

“ Thank you, my dear Sir Joseph, but my affairs are in hands that cannot be interfered with.”

“ My dear Belzoni,” rejoined Don José with shrug the fourth, “ this is child’s play ; if you would even let one know in whose hands they are—”

“ In those of Providence, Sir Joseph Paulett,” said Belzoni in a loud voice, rising and opening the door as if he expected his guest would take the hint and his departure together ; but the outside of a door was not a position very easy to make Don José take up. So, though moving towards it, he turned round, and said :

“ If you want to go into town, Bel, I can give you a

lift ; and, by the bye, I should like you to see my dentet ; I have got one on a new plan.”

“ Eh ! what ?” said Belzoni chuckling, and opening his snuff-box to Don José, “ have you really paid for it ? for I know generally you get your carriages on de plan of not paying for them.”

The hero of Saragossa was too much a man of the world not to laugh at a jest of this kind, even at his own expense, especially as laughter is the best alkali to neutralize the sharpness of ridicule ; so he said with a smile :

“ Why confound it, a man can’t be expected to pay everything ; and I pay so many visits, that the bills take their chance.”

“ Ah ! *ma foi*, de compliments have de best of it, as dey are sure to be accepted ; but, for de poor visits, I doubt if dey are more honoured dan de bills, so I would discontinue dem, if I were you, my dear Don José ;” laughed Belzoni ; “ and I shall be happy to discount you this one, and give you a receipt in full against all future demands upon your time.”

The forced laugh with which Don José received this broad hint, sounded as like “ impertinent old fool,” as a mere cachinnation could do ; however, of course, like castles in the clouds, or coffins in the fire, this was the mere force of imagination, as though the sun shone bright, the wind was high, and moreover, rushing like a conqueror through the long oak passage, as Madame Caramel, albeit not ordinarily the most

expeditious person in the world in her movements, had on this occasion flown to the hall door with the alacrity of a London porter, and now stood with it wide open to afford Sir Joseph Paulett every facility for his departure, which we also had the pleasure of witnessing, having left our ambush, and crept to Belzoni's side, who held the sitting-room door open until the outer one was fairly shut. Bloom making her appearance a few minutes after, Nelly took charge of a small Russian leather trunk, which contained her things, though Grace suggested that she had better go down, and send Mole up for it; but she seemed to prefer any fatigue to unnecessarily, that is, voluntarily, coming in contact with that formidable personage. So we took leave of Belzoni, and returned home, where we found the twelve Miss O'Donnells! their four brothers, and two Miss Abrahams, awaiting us.

CHAPTER VII.

IT was not to be supposed that we could pass our lives in juvenile *fêtes* with Bloom Belzoni and the twelve Miss O'Donnells, or even repose "in Abraham's bosom," seeing that we had not yet received our "evil things in this world." "Pleasure deferred is not lost," sayeth the proverb; but in that respect, at least, pain has the advantage of it, as there is always more certainty of recovery attending its delay than that of pleasure.

It will be remembered that we lived in an island—and an island in the War, like the heroine of a pantomime, was always threatened with invasions from every quarter. Napoleon, or Boneypartey, as the maid-servants called him, had quite succeeded Bogey, and every other *loup-garou* in the *répertoire* of nursery-terrors; and indeed when he, terrific as he was, did

not, with his elder brother, the Prince of Darkness (a piece of local theology in which I then religiously believed) prove sufficient to awe me into obedience, or deter me from revolt, it was announced to me that “Mrs. Boney should come and take me, and then I’d see how it would be.” Now, of this much maligned member of the “gentler sex” I had conceived such unutterable horror, that even in after-life, when I beheld the cold, inane, selfish, and sensual ugliness of Marie Louise, I’m not sure that the aversion was in any way diminished; but at that time I had, merely from hearing her made the pinnacle of the imperial tyranny, endowed her with as great an aversion to me as that evinced by my aunt Marley, with, if possible, greater power to use it.

So much for the moral: *quant au physique*, I had given her a nankin-coloured skin, covered with large black spots, like those of a leopard, only without hair, which would have redeemed them in my eyes; a face like Punch, and large green tigerish eyes, to say nothing of horns, hoofs, and tails, *ad libitum*; which were among the least of the attractions with which I had endowed her.

In those days there were none of those deputy-Providences, nursery-governesses; though, if there had been, they would, poor things, have been rather better remunerated for their unpayable services than they are in these enlightened times of progress and improvement. Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, the French

institutrice, had not yet arrived; so that the poison had full time to work, and of days, that my indomitable spirit rose superior to the Corsican usurper and his still more appalling spouse, the dreadful night was sure to hear me (unable to close my eyes from terror) read my recantation aloud, in the following heretical ritual :—“ Good Mr. d—l! good Mr. Buonaparte! I’m sure I like the d—l!—I like Buonaparte! and I’m sure Mrs. Buonaparte must be the handsomest lady that ever was seen—handsomer a great deal than my Aunt Marley, and a greater lady, too!”—for I would not, for twenty thousand toy-shops, have made so free as to call her a woman; and indeed, according to my pre-conceived notions of her, she did not deserve the name.

Nelly, it is true, was for nothing in all this wicked foolery; and, though she had been guilty of innumerable mermaids and “ say monsters” at Castle Sedley, which she had raised as a *corps de réserve* for the tug militant of my education, yet she told the English maids (the awe of their caps having greatly subsided), “that it was a sin and a shame, so it was, to frighten de child wid what ra-ally *did* exist, and might, widout de Lord’s purtection, come any day and make mince-pies of us.”

Ah, Nelly! Nelly! like all injudicious friends, in attempting to serve me, you only made matters worse: for by this speech, uttered in my hearing, you set the seal of certainty upon my painful doubts.

Grace did her best to persuade me that my diurnal fears were groundless, but that my nocturnal litanies were positively wicked ; for that Aunt Marley said Bonaparte was the greatest man that ever lived, and so he couldn't be a bad man.

Grace had uttered a profound truth unawares, for to be really great, a man must be good ; nevertheless, she need not have been in such a hurry to break a lance for Napoleon, as he was not the first, and won't be the last of the world's great men, whom a great portion of his contemporaries, and a still greater portion of posterity, has sent to the D—l !

"Oh, but," said I, "Aunt Marley is always praising the French Revolution, and yet what dreadful stories Uncle Paulett tells of it, and Dr. O'Donnell, too—and they were at the beginning of it, and must know : besides, look at those dreadful, dreadful pictures, in those big books in the library!"

I here alluded to a very large folio edition of the "History of the French Revolution," bound in Russia, with splendid plates, which the Duc de Bouillon had made my uncle a present of, upon his having taken it into his head to fall in love with my Aunt Marley. I may as well mention that circumstance here, lest I should forget it, though I never can forget his kindness, or all the pretty *bijouterie* and delicious fruit and flowers he used to send Grace and me, during the long siege of twelve years that he laid to my Aunt Marley, accom-

panied with madrigals and epigrams, at her, authenticated with his well-known signature, which looked for all the world like

P I C C A D I L L Y.

But considering, poor, dear old man, that he was nearly as wide as Piccadilly, no wonder that his name should look like it ; for at that time he was, if anything, larger than his cousin, Louis Dix-huit, though more like in face to the pictures of Louis XVI. We were much annoyed, when we arrived at the respectable ages of twelve and fourteen, to find that my Aunt Marley had refused the offer he had so doatingly made her, for he was then seventy-two.

We insisted strongly that if she did not love him we did ; but somehow or other neither she nor he seemed to consider that sufficient, even though his son, poor Philip d'Auvergne, who was afterwards drowned, was also on our side. But when we arrived at years of discretion, that is, when Charles X. was king, and we found ourselves going to balls in Paris, and properly dressed, we were still more annoyed that we had an aunt who could claim a *tabouret à la cour*, as Duchesse de Bouillon (though the poor Duke himself at that time was no more). We thought in those days of white *tulle* and white roses : it would have been so pleasant to have called the king one's cousin, even by marriage !

Indeed, I believe my Aunt Marley herself was of the

same opinion by this time, the more so that there had already been a slight, a very slight, tincture of royalty in the family, *le moindre soupçon*, as the French say, as a sister-in-law of my Grand-uncle Paulett's, the mother of Sir Reginald Paulett and another relay of nephews and nieces, the wife of his favourite brother, had *en seconde noces*, married the reigning Prince of one of the petty Italian States. She, like my Aunt Marley, had also been a great beauty, which beauty she largely bequeathed to her share of the family, and something better too, for they were decidedly the most gentleman-like and respectable branch of it, though a little cold, and somewhat stately ; but this, perhaps, was owing to their slight attack of royalty, though they had taken it in the very mildest form : *mais quand même ? qui s'y frotte s'y pique !* But I am running away on this royal road into years that only came too soon ; so let me return. One of poor Grace's arguments at this time was, in answer to my sweeping assertion that every one had had his head cut off in that horrid revolution, that that was not true ; for look at all the French *émigrés* that were at ——, besides the Duc de Bouillon, and all the people too my Uncle Paulett employed. And Monsieur La Pépinière, our French master, though he disliked Bonaparte, would tell me that he was by no means the sort of monster that I imagined him to be, and had something else to do than to come and take away naughty children ; and so Mademoiselle de Guilleragues would tell me also when she came.

But the very name of Mademoiselle de Guilleragues gave me a shudder, for my Uncle Paulett had told my aunts, in order to make them kind and considerate towards her, that she had been *dame de compagnie* to the poor Princesse de Lamballe ; and forthwith one of the large books was sent for from the library, and my Aunt Bell, by way of something pleasing and instructive, showed me the horrid picture of the unfortunate Princess's head stuck upon a pike, and paraded through Paris, in the midst of an infuriated mob. So awfully graphic was the delineation, that it haunted me, and ever after poor Mademoiselle de Guilleragues was associated in my mind with the murder of the Princess de Lamballe ; and with that peculiar species of inverted logic (alas, not always confined to children), because she had lived with this ill-fated lady, I confounded her with the accomplices, or at least with the accessories, of her death ; and in my inmost soul, therefore, set her down as one of Bonaparte's secret emissaries also.

Such an effect had these internal terrors upon me that I became thin and ill from want of sleep and loss of appetite ; nor were my fears at all abated by the news that the Duke of Brunswick and the German Legion were to arrive in a day or two, *en route* for Spain ; the very word legion conjured up to my timorous imagination nothing short of a diabolical phalanx, and it was not till the dear, good Duke had been domiciled with us a week, and had won every heart in the house, old and young, by his frank kindness and

unaffected amiability, especially to us children, that my fears began to fade, though to the long beards and longer pipes of the legion it took much more to get used ; but at last even the smell of tobacco was forgiven, for the sake of the exquisite harmonies with which they filled the air in the stillness of the night, as they sang in parts along the beach, with that perfect unity of time and tune of which Germans alone are masters. Even Grace, so good, so orthodox in all things, used to get out of bed and open the window to listen to them ; and of a moonlight night these concerts were infinitely more delightful than any I have ever heard since ; and such is the omnipotence of music—at least of such music—that it completely banished my *idées Napoléoniennes* ; but it was not because they were got out of it, but my head was franchised from absurdity altogether.

This said German Legion wore black velvet caps, in shape something like a chimney-top, about a quarter of an ell long, at the other end of which was sewn a flat round, about the size of a dinner-plate, lined either with card-board, or some other substantial material, and embroidered outside in circles of narrow gold braid, and this round hung over, not ungracefully, on the right side. Now it was not to be supposed that in the war, when everything was military, and ladies were *à la lettre* always in battle array, bearing about in their heterogeneous costume either some reminiscence of a victory or some tribute to the hero of it, that a

whole family could let such an opportunity escape of making themselves ridiculous.

Accordingly, two days after the arrival of the German Legion saw us, one and all, inducted into black velvet Brunswick caps, in compliment to the Duke,—I'm not sure that even Nelly had not received orders to convert the immortal brown beaver into a Brunswick Oëls, but I am very certain that she did not obey, not only because I heard her soliloquizing one morning about that time—“A pity I don't endade go convarting meself into one of thim outlandish sogers at wanchet; they'll be expicting me to grow a beard next, I suppose! Thim that sows may reap, but it won't be me!” but because also for many years after the brown beaver in its original form, or rather want of form, continued to “brave the battle and the breeze !”

About this time, an incident occurred which brought me acquainted with the only fault that the closest intimacy ever enabled me to discover in my Uncle Paulett; and though it is a fault common to most men, ay, to the wisest, the best, and even to the most physically brave, it is nevertheless one that produces the most baneful effects, the most fatal results to their own happiness, and to that of all with whom they are connected—I mean want of moral courage. The fact is, my aunts' tempers had already taken effect upon him, and he had begun to adopt that fatal code of—anything for a quiet life! A modern uncle, no doubt, would have asserted his authority, reminded them of

the obligations they were under to him, and requested them to leave the house if they made it disagreeable to him, and in this instance a modern uncle would have done right ; but he, from the very fact of its being his house, and of their being under obligations to him, transposed the order of things, and with a refinement of delicacy that made him at once the greatest victim and the most loveable of human beings, forbore, yielded, and obeyed on all occasions, as if *he* had been in the penniless and dependent position for fear any of us should be reminded that we were.

Peace ! gentle spirit, I forgive thee every childish tear thy one fault caused me to shed, in remembrance of thy bright, angel nature, of which no copy now remains ! The only vengeance my poor father had taken on our extraordinary flight was, that of not making us any allowance, a plan which he persisted in up to the last day of his life, saying, that as we were living in such splendour, we did not want anything from him ; but he was neither unjust nor vindictive, (why should he have been so, for they are the twin vices of the aggressor). He did not, as he might have done, insist upon our returning to him : on the contrary, he frankly acknowledged that his house, filled as it was with drunken fox-hunters, was not a proper home for two motherless girls. Upon this, both my aunts' favourite mode of venting their tempers was by reminding us that we were beggars, had no home, and were for all things indebted to their charity. *Their*

charity! oh, no, verily, there was none left for them, their uncle had monopolized it all, and not only their share, but from what I have since seen of it, the whole world's.

He was that living, breathing, active, incarnate virtue, believing all things, hoping all things, and certainly giving and forgiving all things; and yet contriving to appear ever the obliged, and never the obliger, when he heaped us with masters of every description, whom he selected from among the poor *émigrés*, and to whom he paid the most exorbitant salaries, not grinding and profiting by the necessities, after the prudent fashion of modern times, but on the contrary, his whole object being to convince them that they were not the least indebted to him, as it was entirely to gratify the wishes of his nieces and supply the wants of his grand-nieces that he had enlisted their services; and if this became suspicious from having duplicate masters for the same language or accomplishment, he would obviate that by telling one that he had him for his pronunciation, or his method of teaching, which he thought better than his colleague's, and as each were confidentially awarded this palm, there was no fear of any jealous rivalry being excited in either. While, on the other hand, we were apologized to for being bored with so many masters, but it was the only way of letting those poor people acquire for themselves a little independence; and to encourage us to study, or, as far as I was concerned, to reward me for not studying, the poorer refugees

would be ordered to make two or three dozen pairs of satin shoes, parterres of artificial flowers, or a whole *ameublement* of doll's furniture, according to whatever their different *métiers* might be.

What astonished me as I grew up was, how so crystally clear and open a character as my Uncle Paulett's, could have so impenetrably mysterious a right hand; for never by any accident did it let its left sister know what it did; which was the reason, I suppose, that it never signed its owner's name to a public subscription; and yet, in any five years of his life, I will venture to say he gave more hundreds and tens of hundreds to relieve the wants of his fellow-creatures than would suffice, at the present ratio of Whig charity (?), to pension off a whole wilderness of distressed widows of eminent men, or oceans of destitute daughters of departed heroes. But to my first terrible discovery *that my Uncle Paulett had a fault!*

I suppose it is needless to say that we were never allowed to take money from any one but relations, nor indeed had we much temptation to infringe this order, considering how lavishly, not only my uncles, and the aides-de-camp, but also the two Dukes, heaped us with toys; but as I mean to "nothing extenuate" as far as I myself am concerned, or "set down aught in malice" with regard to others, I must candidly confess that I was one of those Geneva watch kind of characters that are sure to go wrong, if not constantly wound up, and properly attended to. Now, as I have

before said, Mademoiselle de Guilleragues had not yet arrived, and Nelly could not always enact guardian angel to me, as she was sometimes obliged to eat her dinner, though so doing involved a contact with the redoubted Mole; and as for my aunts, it may be supposed how fully their time was occupied, when for a whole week my Aunt Marley had not found a single leisure moment to call me a "vile wretch," or my Aunt Bell to give me a box on the ear; but as they thought it right to see us at least once a day, one morning that we were comfortably seated with Bloom Belzoni, who, with Grace, was good-naturedly cutting me out a Brunswick cap for my doll, which, as it had been a present from the Duke, I thought I could not do less than pay his generosity so charming a compliment, though, in sooth, it had now grown somewhat stale, for one saw nothing else for miles round, till the inhabitants began to look like so many ambulating eclipses of the sun, and strangers to wonder how on earth so much gold braid and black velvet had been drawn to one focus.

In the midst of our cabinet council, as to whether a feather would not be an improvement to the cap, which being negatived by the better taste of the two elders, I had decided on transferring to the battered brows of Miss Wapsey, a servant came to say that my aunts wished to see us in the summer-house, on the lawn, but that we must go immediately, as they were going out to ride, and the horses would be round in

ten minutes. Grace and Bloom got up to go, merely putting on their garden bonnets (for the Brunswick caps were only for the carriage, or for walking out *en grande tenue*). I was about to follow, when Dr. O'Donnell arrived, who had been attending me for the low nervous fever my nocturnal dread of the Bonaparte family had brought on. I told Grace and Bloom to go, and that I would come directly.

"Well, and how is my little patient to-day?" said the Doctor, goodnaturedly shaking hands with me.

"Oh, very well, quite well; indeed, I don't want any more draughts."

"What, I suppose you'd prefer playthings, eh?" laughed he, looking round the well-strewed floor.

"Oh, yes; a great deal."

"Well," said he, putting his hand into his pocket, and bringing out two bright guineas, "I, unfortunately, must stick to the draughts, and so have no time to choose toys, nor should I know what you would like; but perhaps, like a good little girl, you'll choose some for yourself; and so saying, he put the two guineas into my hand. I remember, as vividly as if it had only happened yesterday, the rush of tumultuous and conflicting feelings that now dyed my cheeks and ears in scarlet; regret was paramount, that I had been forbidden to accept money from strangers; shame, at the bottom, that I should have been offered it; while between these two extremes, danced buoyantly a vague notion, that with such a sum I should be for ever

independent of my aunts, and could even hire a ship, and go and see my father; for as to leaving my dear good uncle entirely, that I never would do; then came the toy-shop, with its scarlet and yellow temptations, and I with the golden power of selecting any of them that I pleased; oh, no, decidedly here was too much self-denial, and too much temptation tied together, like the Mezentian punishment of the living body and the dead, for my feeble, half-fledged virtue not to sink under so ponderous a burden; still I stammered, stretching out my hand to the Doctor, to take back the money, yet tightly grasping it the while:

"Oh, no, I mustn't take it; my aunts would be so angry; they said we were never to take money from strangers."

"Pooh! pooh! I hope you don't call me a stranger, Miss Mirry."

And before I could make either a negative or an affirmative reply to this query, Dr. O'Donnell had vanished, and there I stood confounded and alone, looking at the guilty guineas with much the same feelings that Lady Macbeth is supposed to look upon the "damned spot." My first impulse was to fling them down as if they had burnt me, and I did so, standing looking at them however for some seconds with my hands behind my back to keep them as it were from "picking and stealing." I wish I had remained so, but I didn't; whoever does stop short on the threshold of wrong? So like others, I stood contemplating

temptation till all its evil was effaced, and I saw nothing but its brightness ; and so bright did the guineas look, as they lay on the carpet at some distance from my fascinated gaze, that my conscience soon grew as elastic as that of a cabinet minister. In a word, I stooped to the symbols of royalty, and made my own of the current fallacies I had at first virtuously rejected, and with a still further evidence of diplomacy, which even at that age would have rendered me competent to the Foreign Office, in placing the gold in my bosom I resolved to “bide my time,” and let the lie that was to get me out of this scrape grow out of circumstances ; for a premeditated lie is unpardonable. Whereas falsehoods *improvisés* are nothing more than proofs of that quick tact and fertility of invention which are considered one of the necessary attributes of office.

Relieved by this decision, I hastened to the summer-house, where I found my aunts ready equipped for their ride, and surrounded by their satellites, who were composed of several members of the German Legion ; also the two aides-de-camp, Lord Frederick Farnham and Captain Dapperwit ; indeed they were the centre of my aunts’ social system, nothing went on without them ; for Lord Frederick sang like Braham, rode a race as well as Chiffney, had won the cup at three successive regattas, and was reckoned the best cricket-player in England. While Dapperwit was skilled in the most exquisite caligraphy that ever

copied verses into an album, was thoroughly *au fait* to all the most amusing and ingenious *jeux de société*, also sang an excellent second, and moreover, like the youngest Miss Primrose, “had a very pretty knack of telling fortunes by the cards.”

On entering the summer-house, my Aunt Marley was standing at one of the windows with the poor Duke of Brunswick, whose eyes were filled with tears ; for he was showing her a lock of his wife’s hair, which he always wore in the hilt of his sword. Dapperwit, who was a little *épris* with my Aunt Bell, but who was still more so with the interest my Uncle Paulett then possessed, was looking all sorts of silly things, and saying sillier, at which Lord Frederick and the Germans in their broken English were laughing.

“ ‘Pon my soul,” cried Lord Frederick, “ if Miss Paulett persists in continuing so inhuman I would not stand it any longer were I you, Dapperwit. Here,” added he, tapping the brazier with the scabbard of his sword, “ is every convenience for committing suicide, or, in other words, reducing your heart by means of its own flame to cinders ; you have only to fancy yourself Socrates, preferring fire to hemlock ; that’s all.”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! Ter Tifle ! bote vere ish de gock dat he shall sagrifiche do Æsgulabius firsht ?” asked Baron Doodlezac, one of the Legion.

“ Oh ! ” said Dapperwit, good-humouredly, “ when one sacrifices an ‘ass’ to him, surely Esculapius cannot be so unreasonable as to expect more.”

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the Baron, slapping the poor aid-de-camp like a sledge-hammer on the back, "you are von capital fellowsh, and no more assh dan I am."

"*L'un n'empêche pas l'autre,*" murmured Lord Frederick.

While all the world was thus busy with himself, or his neighbour, what I then thought a brilliant idea, struck me as to how I might become lawfully possessed of my ill-gotten wealth; it was this: it so happened that on the sill of the window by which my Aunt Marley was standing there was a mignonette-box; under the pretext of joining the Miss Cookes and Lady Laura O'Shindy, who with some of the German officers were looking through telescopes at a French *chasse-marée* in the distance, I left the summer-house, and walked round it outside till I came to the window where my Aunt Marley was standing, and upon the mignonette-box of which she had laid down her pocket-handkerchief and *casolette*. Now, though in those days California was undreamt of, save in the foreshadowings of the works of Sir Walter Raleigh, I immediately repaired to 'the diggings,' which I commenced by poking with a stick among the mignonette, and when I had enacted this pantomimic falsehood for what I considered a sufficiently plausible length of time, I suddenly exclaimed, holding up the clay-daubed coins:

"Oh! look here, Aunt Marley, what I have found!"

But my aunt, still deeply engrossed by her conver-

sation with the Duke of Brunswick, who was telling her his strong presentiment that he should fall (as he did) in the first general action in which he should again find himself, merely stretched out her hand for the money, saying :

“There—there, give it to me; and go and play, child.”

“But is it yours?” demurred I, making a last effort to retain that which I had already waded through so much iniquity to possess.

“Yes—yes,” said my aunt, mechanically taking the money, and not even turning her head towards me, so interested was she in her conversation. At this moment, one of the footmen came to say that the horses were at the door. My Aunt Marley scrambled up her handkerchief and *vinaigrette* and still speaking in an under tone, she took the Duke’s arm, and left the summer-house, followed by the rest of the party; and although Bloom Belzoni and Grace stopped their ears against the horrible clatter of so many spurs and swords clashing against the marble steps as they descended, I stood as mute and motionless as if I also had been a part of the same marble. I heard nothing till I heard the echo of the horses’ hoofs galloping away, and with them my two guineas—Mine!

CHAPTER VIII.

THIS affair of the guineas had ended precisely as it ought to have done, and gave me a salutary lesson at the onset of life; namely, a practical illustration of that immutable fact, that what is begun in wrong can never end right. Had I succeeded in this first flagrant delinquency, it would doubtless have been fatal to every germ of honesty and rectitude in my composition; but, thank Heaven, I did not; and the bitter humiliation and self-reproach which I experienced at this failure in my *début* in commercial speculations and the “distribution of wealth,” make me think, upon looking back, that Nelly was right, and that “for all I was so banged about by de Mistress and Missh Bell, still God had a hand in me.” I was so utterly miserable for the rest of this day, that in vain Grace and Bloom asked me what was the matter,

and if I was not well. Still I kept aloof from them, for I felt as if I should contaminate them, that is, that they would not speak to me if they knew what I had done ; and so I paced round and round the lawn, decapitating, by means of a withered branch that I had broken off of a Persian lilac, all the innocent heads of the michaelmas daisies, and the tops of the geraniums.

“ Don’t, Mirry,” cried Grace, at length, running across the lawn to the rescue, and taking the stick by main force out of my hand, “ don’t ! Fraser will be so angry when he sees the way you have destroyed all the flowers, and the litter you have made. What is the matter with you ?”

“ Nothing.”

“ Oh, there must be something the matter ; for I never saw you so odd and so naughty as you are to-day.”

“ Well, now you know what’s the matter with me,” said I, bursting into a forced laugh ; “ I’m like Dermot, exthramely bould, Ma’am, that’s all.”

As this story of Dermot was a standing nursery joke, Grace laughed too, and shaking her head, said, “ That’s true,” as she re-crossed the lawn to join Bloom. After I had sulked myself ill at my own share in the guinea question, a sudden thought darted through my brain, as to whether my Aunt Marley was not even more to blame than I was, for she had said the money was hers, when she must have known that it was not :—this was a consolation. It is always

so, to find any one at least as bad as ourselves. Does this arise from inherent depravity ? or from a yearning for sympathy in all things ? A little of both, perhaps. But then in stepped Justice (who scarcely ever arbitrates between human beings, except in a court of conscience ; and even those, alas ! are not always open) ; and she reminded me that my Aunt Marley was so pre-occupied, that she had paid little attention to either me or the money. Oh, yes, that must be it ; for of course, grown-up people couldn't tell stories, any more than they could want money ; and it seems I had jumped to a true conclusion, for experience has since proved to me that the one is just as *impossible* as the other.

But then, at that rate, my Aunt Marley ought to be undeceived. Why should she be left in quiet possession of two guineas' worth of illusion, at the expense of my having that much less ? And yet again, in order to undeceive her, she must know the heinous part which I had acted in the business ; this was not pleasant certainly, but still anything was better than her coolly walking off with this gold mine, for which I had paid so dearly by the terrible struggle of the last two hours, and the ultimate loss of my own self-esteem. The difficulty then became as to the how ; and when ; I should broach this weighty matter to her ; (always supposing that when it came to the point, I found my courage constructed upon an anti-Bob Acre's principle, and that it did not "ooze out

at my fingers'-ends ;") for no Czarina was ever more difficult of access than my Aunt Marley.

Where then to turn in this dilemma ? where, indeed, but to our only city of refuge, my Uncle Paulett ? "Yes, that's what I must do," thought I, "go and tell him everything, and get him to tell it to my Annt Marley." No sooner said than done. I hurried across the lawn, swinging both arms much after the same graceful fashion as a helper traversing a stable-yard ; for it is no less strange than true, that that peculiar genus of biped invariably uses more energetic motion with their arms in walking than with their feet. On reaching the hall, such a coward does conscience make of one, that when the two lazy knights of the shoulder-knot, that were sitting there reading the papers, stood up at my entrance, I stammered and blushed, and pulled the string of my cambric muslin bonnet till I tore it, which was, indeed, a work of supererogation, till one of them said :

"Shall I call Mrs. Bawn, Miss?"

Whereupon, attempting to assume the authoritative air of my Aunt Marley, but in vain, it could not be crammed into so small a compass, I was therefore necessitated to dwindle down into civility, and said :

"Oh, no, if you please, don't ; I want to see my uncle."

The Captain is out with the ladies, Miss."

"No, I don't mean my Uncle Charles, I want to

see my Grand-uncle, Sir George, if you will go and ask him, if you please, if I may come?"

"I'm very sorry, Miss, but we dusn't disturb his Excellency, as to-day is the English Bag Day, and he is very busy with Mr. Waltham."

"Well, but isn't he going out to ride to-day?" asked I, as a *pis-aller*.

"Is the hosses ordered, do you know, James?" said my referee, turning to his colleague.

"I believe they be, at four; but I know Mr. Morden has had orders to lay for only three, in the small dining-room, as no one dines at home but Sir George and Mr. Waltham."

"Then who's the third cover for?" pumped James.

"The Dooke of Bullone, I believe."

"Oh!" said James, as if much relieved by knowing the worst.

"But if he is to go out at four—what o'clock is it now?" said I.

"Half-past two ezactly, Miss," replied the chronological Mr. Thomas, interrogating the pale face of a sort of silver turnip (evidently a married one, as it was attached by an iron chain), which he drew from some mysterious gulf under his waistcoat.

"That's two hours to four, then," said I, counting on my fingers that two and two made four.

"Oh, dear, no, Miss, honly a hour hand a alf," responded Thomas, with a degree of contempt for my ignorance that he could ill suppress.

"That's a long time too, though, isn't it?" demanded I, exposing my ignorance still further.

"As near as can be, six quarters of an hour, Miss."

"Why, you said just now that it was only an hour and a half," said I, almost crying.

"Ezactly, Miss; the six quarters is honly small change for the large hour hand a alf, Miss—that's hall."

Re-assured by this lucid explanation, I returned to the lawn; but my shoe-string giving way as I was going down the steps, caused me to stoop to pick it up, by which means I unintentionally became an eavesdropper, and overheard the following fragments of conversation.

"And *that!*!" said Mr. Thomas, evidently meaning me by the word *that*, so emphatically pronounced—" *that!* is how the nobility and gentry brings up their young. Why, I should be ashamed if my Bill, though he's three year younger, didn't know the time o' day better."

"Ah, but as Mrs. Marley is always a saying at dinner, Tummas, we must make hevrey allowance for the circumstances in which hindewiduals his placed; and jist consider what a clever father your Bill has got."

"There you go with your jokes agin," growled Tummas, in return for this compliment. "Shove us over that ere noospaper, do."

"That's your sort," responded James, presenting

him with a flaming account of the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo, and then

“Trembled into silence as before!”

Opposite to the house, on the other side of the lawn, was a rising ground, with a thick coppice of trees; among these I now hid myself, keeping my eyes steadily fixed upon the house; and before the, to me, interminable hour and a half was expired, I heard Nelly’s voice several times imploring me, “if I didn’t want to dhrive her wild entirely, to appear;” but even thus invoked, I remained invisible, merely executing, for my own private amusement, and with the fidelity of a shadow, all Nelly’s gestures and exclamations; the latter sometimes so loud, that it caused her to cry out more than once:

“Och! Devil bother you for an echo: one wud tink you had niver heerd a Christian spake befor, dat you musht go repating ivery word dey do be shaying.”

At length, fairly tired out with making the “rocks and woods” repeat my name, and not thinking, like Orpheus, of seeking me in the shades, Nelly went in, and at last the horses came to the door; and about a quarter of an hour after them, my Uncle Paulett appeared on the steps. I darted from my ambush, and ran over to him. He lifted me up, and kissed me; and after his usual good-natured inquiries about our plays and our pleasures, and anything else that he

thought would interest me, he put me down, and had his foot in the stirrup, when with a desperate effort, I grasped his coat, and said :

“ Uncle, I want to speak to you.”

“ Madam, I am at your service,” said he, with his kind, joyous smile, dismounting and taking off his hat to make me a low bow, as was his wont when for fun he used to treat Grace and I with great ceremony.

“ Where shall we have our conference?—that is, where shall we go? for I suppose what you have to say to me is a secret.”

“ Oh, yes, a great long one,” replied I, laughing.

“ The more flattered at your confidence, Ma’am,” rejoined he, continuing the jest, as he led me into a little study off the hall and shut the door.

“ Now, my child,” said he, taking me on his knee, “ let us hear this mighty secret, and see what I am to do.”

After much blushing, stuttering, and hanging my head, not forgetting my unhappy cambric muslin frock, which I gathered up and twisted like a rope in my nervous excitement, till what began like hemp ended in tinder, I at length revealed the whole affair, from the moment of Dr. O’Donnell’s giving me the guineas, and the conflicts of my expiring probity, down to the last act of the drama at the mignonette-box; and the, to me, highly tragical conclusion of my Aunt Marley’s riding off with my spoils. Till I came to the “diggings” I took courage, from seeing a

difficultly-suppressed smile now beaming in my uncle's eyes, now playing round his mouth ; but, when I came to my acted falsehood in the summer-house, he knit his brows, and put me down. Not all the manifold beatings I had ever received from my aunts, caused me the pain of this silent reproof on the part of my uncle. I felt, though he had not yet spoken, that I had at one blow annihilated much of his affection, and given him a bad opinion of me. A sharp pain shot through my heart,—I burst into a passion of tears, and falling at his feet, I sobbed out, with clasped hands :

“ Oh, dear, dear Uncle Paulett, don’t hate me ; I know how wrong I have been ; I never will take money from any one again ; and indeed—indeed, I’ll tell Aunt Marley the truth about it, as I have told you.”

“ Hush !” cried my uncle, mechanically turning his head towards the door, and in his turn supplicatingly raising his hands. “ No, that is the very thing you must not do—you must not tell your Aunt Marley,” added he, lifting me up on the table ! “ it was wrong of you in the first instance to take this money from O’Donnell, when your aunts had told you never to do so from any one. You should ask me, or them, when you want money. But that, had you confessed it, would have been but a trifling fault in comparison with your pretending to find it among the mignonette. Miriam, that was bad—very bad ; for you had thought a long chain of lies, before you acted that one.”

It was the first time he had ever called me Miriam—solemn, ceremonious Miriam, instead of affectionate, playful Mirry; and the word went through my heart, cold and sharp as a dagger.

"I know it was wrong," cried I, bursting into a fresh paroxysm of tears; "and that is the reason that I am determined to own it all to Aunt Marley."

"Don't you see, you little goose, how justly angry your Aunt Marley will be, and what good reason she will have to punish you severely?"

"I know that; but then I deserve to be punished, don't I?"

"Why you certainly do; but since you confess this so frankly, I am in great hopes that you will be cured without punishment, and will keep your word, not only of never taking money from strangers again—for that is the least of it—but of never telling a lie again; for in doing so it is God you disobey, and that is far worse than disobeying your aunts or me."

"And will God never forgive me?" asked I, now as pale and cold, as I had before been flushed and burning.

"Yes, if you pray to Him to forgive you with your whole heart, and really repent."

"What does repent mean?"

"It means never again to commit the fault, or sin, for which we say we are sorry; that is the only real repentance, at least the only one that God accepts, and for which He accords His forgiveness."

"Oh! then indeed I do repent, for I never, never will tell a lie again; so now God has forgiven me, and I can't help it if my Aunt Marley won't."

"But I don't wish you to tell your aunts of this; it would only flurry and annoy them." And my poor uncle coloured (as well he might) at his pusillanimous consideration for my aunts' nerves, though indeed, in consideration of his own, he might be pardoned for taking such care of theirs; but I, who was storm-proof by this time, felt no such tenderness towards them, and so merely said:

"But if I don't tell my Aunt Marley, and if I'm not punished, how am I to get back Dr. O'Donnell's two guineas to return them to him?"

"You can give him these," said my uncle, putting his hand into his pocket, and giving me two.

"Oh, but that is not just," said I; "my Aunt Marley has told a story as well as me, and—"

"Hush!" interrupted my uncle, putting his hand on my mouth, "you must not say that your Aunt Marley has told a story: she has made a mistake, she evidently thought the money was hers."

"Then why should she be let to make a mistake, and not be told of it?" said I; "it's not just, and I want justice."

"Listen to the little puppy," cried my uncle (this being a great pet appellation of his); "she wants justice! forsooth; so does the whole world, child; but who ever gets it?"

"I don't know; but I don't."

"Now look here," said my uncle coaxingly, feeling how completely I, child as I was, had him at a vantage; "the great thing in this world, my dear child, is to make the best of things; for as to making them as we would like, it's utterly impossible. And you ought to think yourself very lucky to have got so well out of the scrape,—the more so, Ma'am, that I invite you and your sister (if you will do me the honour), and your friend, Miss Belzoni, to come and spend this evening with me."

"Oh!" said I, my eyes sparkling; "and will you tell us stories?"

"As many as you please, Ma'am."

"Ah! but will you love me, too, and call me Mirry again?"

"I think I can even promise to do that."

And thinking the battle was now over, and that he had gained the victory, he kissed me, slapped my cheek with his glove, and lifting me down off the table, proceeded to the door. But I, supremely happy as I now felt, could not without a last effort, leave my Aunt Marley in unmolested possession of what by no means belonged to her; so, returning to the charge, as my uncle opened the door, I said:

"But musn't I really tell Aunt Marley?"

"On no account," cried my uncle, in evident alarm, placing his finger on his lip, and shaking his head.

" But how can she repent of having told a story, if she is not let to know that she has done so ? "

But logic, where his nieces and nephews were concerned, not being my poor dear uncle's *forte*, he found it convenient not to hear this query ; and so merely said, as he mounted Lightning, his beautiful Arabian, and I stood on the steps :

" Remember, Mirry, I shall expect you all down to dessert and to pass the evening with me ; and send and ask Mary, and Lily O'Donnell, to come, too ; " and kissing his hand, he turned slowly down the avenue, and in another minute the echoes of Lightning's hoofs, with those of the two dragoons' more substantial steeds, were heard, sharp and clear, galloping along the high road. But as Galileo's last words, as the key turned in his cell of the Inquisition, were a profession of those astronomical opinions, for which he was incarcerated, so mine were as I turned into the house.

" But my Aunt Marley ought not to be let to tell a story though, without being told of it, for all that."

CHAPTER IX.

GLAD as the tidings were that I had to communicate on my return to the school-room, where Grace and Bloom had been wondering for the last three hours where on earth I could be, and why I did not come back ; and Nelly had been in and out on an average three times a minute, to know if I had been “heerd of ?” yet had I the very greatest difficulty in not unburdening my mind still further to Grace about the guineas. Nothing but the strong fetter of my Uncle Paulett’s last injunction, that my aunts were to know nothing about the matter, could have prevented my doing so ; but I knew telling Grace was exactly the same thing as telling my Aunt Marley, as my conscientious sister thought it a duty to tell her everything ; so by way of answer to her question of
“ Where on earth have you been all this time,

Mirry? You've frightened us all out of our wits, and Nelly is almost distracted."

"Oh, I've been with Uncle Paulett; and only think, I've such good news,—every one dines out, except Sir George and Mr. Waltham. And we, that is, Bloom, you, and I; and Mary and Lily O'Donnell, who we are to send to directly, are all to spend the evening with Uncle Paulett, and he'll tell us as many stories as we like, there." And I danced round and round, and clapped my hands; after which I seated myself before a table, upon which stood a looking-glass, and having asked Bloom for a piece of thread, I began trying experiments in dental surgery, by tying it round one of my upper front teeth which had long been loose, and tugging away at it, apparently with herculean efforts, but in reality relaxing them whenever the tooth seemed the least inclined to yield to the assault, and by so doing hurt me in the slightest degree.

"And don't Don José even dine at home?" asked Grace, thinking that would be too good news to be true.

"No, Crooked-nose don't dine at home; for I heard James tell Thomas, that only Uncle Paulett, Mr. Waltham, and the Duc de Bouillon, dined here to-day, and they were to dine in the small dining-room off the yellow-room. Ain't you glad?" And she was glad, for both she and Bloom whirled round, and made an enormous cheese. So much for the dairy.

The quandary appeared immediately after, in the shape of Nelly wringing her hands, and exclaiming :

“ Och ! musha, musha : but dis bates de world for bouldness ; and wheder she’s safe or not, she’ll get her death out, at any rate.”

“ No, I shan’t, I’ve only got my tooth out ; and here it is, look, Nelly,” said I, getting down off tho chair, and triumphantly holding out the tusk as a trophy.”

“ Och, murder ! is it yourself, me darlint ?” screamea Nelly as loudly and harmoniously as an American Indian war-whoop. After which, I had to undergo a rather suffocating *régime* of hugging, terminating by way of tonic in a pretty sharp reprimand for “ frightening de lives out of pable as I had done, and where did I tink I was to go to ?”

“ I don’t know ; but you are to go directly to Mrs. O’Donnell’s, and ask if she will let Mary and Lily come and spend the evening with us, that is, with Uncle Paulett, in the yellow-room, where all the pretty cabinets, and china, and medals, and things are.”

“ Oh, indade, do itsh dochtering I want, sure enough, afther the state you’ve put me in, Missh Miriam ; yet I can’t go by raison of the frocks I want to finish for you and Missh Grace, agin you go down to dishert to-day ; for if you were de Prinche Ragent’s childer itshelf, you’d be a dishgrace to all be lionsh and uney-corns dat ever wash born, going

about in dem two ragsh of rockets dat have only been fit to frighten de crows dish last six months, and even dey wud be mighty schtupid bastes if dey didn't see trough 'em ; but Mishtressh Stillingfleet ish going dere wid some jellies and cakes for de childer, and I'll bid her give Sur George's message."

At length, the happy moment came when we were to be dressed to go down stairs ; and I doubt if any bride of the present day, armed with all the seductive witcheries of Mesdames Minette and Palmyre, capped by Baudron, could be half so well convinced of the irreproachable perfection of their toilette, as we, or at least as I was, upon being stuffed into a large blue jelly-bag, made of an abomination, called, in the War, Salisbury flannel, and (excepting its ugliness) only famous for two things, namely, palpably shrinking both under the influence of fire and water ; and unmercifully scrubbing and scratching the arms and necks of the unfortunate young delinquents condemned to solitary confinement within the remorseless precincts of its woollen pillory.

Nelly having made this addition to our wardrobe upon her own responsibility, had been determined to do the thing handsomely ; consequently, above each tuck was run a piece of tolerably-wide blue and yellow braid, not unlike that which used to adorn old-fashioned liveries, only that this was silk instead of worsted : however, the three huge tucks of these lovely frocks need not have given themselves such airs, and

stuck themselves out so for all that ; for in those days (as far as the tucks of children's frocks were concerned at least), there was no knowing how soon pride would have a fall ; for it no sooner pleased Heaven in the natural course of things that we should grow a couple of inches, than down went a tuck. I was not then aware, that "Nature" had the good taste to "abhor a vacuum," but I know that I did ; for nothing could be more abominable than the appearance of these deserted railroads skirting our garments, which never owned a swifter locomotive than a lukewarm iron, of which Nelly was the solitary stoker. But on the present occasion, the tucks had not all the finery to themselves, for on the front of the bodice the same braid (only narrower) was to be seen in an ingenious sort of puzzle, displayed in a pattern something like that of a lazy-tongs, and the stripes on a backgammon board.

Grace, from her more matured age and quiet deportment, was permitted the "pomp and vanity" of wearing her hair parted down the centre, and though docked close behind, *à la* raw recruit, yet at either side of the forehead luxuriating into tufts of stiff, flat curls, one laid over the other, as round as a set of wedding-rings in their as yet harmless state—before they have left the jeweller's shop. Whilst I, on account of my more perturbed, that is, Tom-boyish habits, was made to look still more brazen, by having my hair brushed up into a sort of cataleptic rigidity, like nothing

in the world but a scrubbing-brush which had received some sudden and terrible alarm, from which its nervous system had never recovered. A pair of bright yellow *kid* shoes, a world too wide, completed my charming costume; the latter were “by particular desire” of Nelly. Grace stoutly resisted, and finally terminated in a pair of black kid.

I confess that even at that age, and in the War, this daffadowndilly *chaussure* struck me as something flagrant and offensive, and even somewhat abusing the universal suffrage people then enjoyed of making themselves ridiculous. But altogether I was so charmed with my appearance in the, to me, novel splendour of the Salisbury flannel, in which I must have looked like a moving panorama of Salisbury Plain, and was so delighted at the pleasant evening in view, that I was too well pleased myself not to wish to please others, and so to please Nelly, I put my foot in it, as indeed one is pretty sure to do when one acts against one’s judgment, even from the most laudable of all motives—that of obliging others. At length, the O’Donnells arrived: Grace ran forward to meet and to greet them, but then she had not yellow kid shoes on. I did not, or rather I could not, for I had tried, but suddenly ended by coming to a full stop in a sort of petrified attitude, not unlike that of the Commandant’s statue inviting Don Giovanni to supper.

I felt so big, that I’m sure I must have been “grand to see;” but some children *are* so silly! and Miss Lily

O'Donnell on coming up to me, even before she kissed me, burst out laughing, and said :

“ Oh, Mirry, how funny you look !”

Funny !—and had I suffered the scrubbings of the Salisbury flannel (which had already produced mock scarlet fever), and shuffled about in a pair of yellow canoes that threatened to upset me at every step I took,—to be called funny ! Verily, I should like to have invested her father's two guineas, which were still in my possession, in the purchase of a dictionary, to have taught that illiterate young person a better choice of language.

“ You had better ask your mamma to give you a blue frock, too, Lily,” said I, with great dignity, which was a polite way of transposing the following aphorism : “ You had better satisfy your longing, than expose your envy.” However it was written, that the O'Donnells and ourselves were to be to each other at once rivals and censors in the matter of dress, as will be seen in its proper time and place ; on all other points we were excellent friends, and as such, the nursery-bell having just rung, we now all descended, I leaning on Bloom, who if she had not admired my dress and *tout-ensemble*, at all events had not told me that I looked funny !

Another delight attending this happy occasion was, that instead of perpetrating the elegant courtesy *de rigueur* at the door, which Nelly's ideas of what she called manners usually exacted, we walked straight

into the little brown dining-room, as it was called, though in reality it was a fine oval room of thirty feet by twenty-five, with the ceiling and panels painted in compartments by Cipriani, and the carving round these panels, and also of the looking-glass over the side-board, which was in a deep recess, was white picked out with brown, very like a chocolate drop, which with the delicacy of the paintings gave this room the air of a large *bonbonnière*, and from this brown and white carving and its brown velvet curtains, it had derived the name of the brown room.

This apartment opened into a drawing-room hung with yellow damask, and looking upon a beautiful terrace, to which one descended from one of the windows by a flight of steps ; it was furnished with Louis Quinze *cabriole* chairs, and *causeuses*, and choice *marqueterie* cabinets, and *bureaux* inlaid with old *sèvre*, the part which let down for writing being covered with purple velvet, and the small drawer daintily lined with white satin. Most of these were presents from the Due de Bouillon, and in one of them were some very costly old turquoise jewelled *sèvre* dessert-plates, and coffee-cups, containing portraits of the beauties of the courts of Louis Quatorze and Louis Quinze, that is to say, *six of one, and half-a-dozen of the other*, and of these, as they appeared on the china, the old De Maintenon and the young Du Barry were unquestionably the handsomest. There were also, several crab-shaped gold snuff-boxes, with portraits let into them of Mademoiselle de Blois, the

Duc de Maine, the Comte de Toulouse, and others of Louis Quatorze's children.

There was, too, in this room a very fine collection of medals, cameos, and other antiques, of all and each of which my uncle used to tell us the history. James had been quite correct in his information. There was, to our unspeakable delight, only my uncle, the Duc de Bouillon, and Mr. Waltham, sitting round the dinner-table when we arrived. Mr. Waltham had a mild, interesting, intelligent face, of which no one could be afraid ; all he received in the shape of salary, which was three hundred pounds a-year, he sent to his mother (a widow) and his only sister. And it was astonishing the pieces of silk, chests of tea, and pipes of wine, my Uncle Paulett was obliged to buy from persons in distress, and afterwards put himself under an obligation to his secretary to disencumber the house of, by sending them to his mother and sister.

The poor old Duc de Bouillon having, much to her annoyance, decided that I was the image of my Aunt Marley, and consequently, according to him, a *délicieuse petite créature*, stretched out his little fat arms to me the moment I appeared ; and as he was, besides being the quintessence of good nature, scrupulously *soigné* in his person, and also adhering to the *ancien régime* in his dress, generally wearing a purple velvet coat, and a white satin waistcoat embroidered in rich wreaths at the pockets, with splendid lace ruffles, and

jabot; and being always moreover redolent of *maréchale*, a perfume then unknown at this side of the channel, I always went to him with quite as much alacrity as he invited me; for after the broad cloth and Hessian boot monstrosities of the men in the War, he was to my childish wonder a curious study of the last link of a gorgeous and gone-by age.

We were all seated round the table—eating, laughing, talking, and enjoying ourselves in the most unrestrained manner; I dauntlessly screaming out from the other end of the table to my Uncle Paulett :

“Now for some stories; you said you’d tell us as many as we pleased.”

“And so I will, Ma’am, but let us finish our wine first; and, when we go into coffee, then it shall be put to the vote what story you would like to hear.”

“It’s not to be about the Prince of Wales, though, going to France secretly with you, and General Conway, to play a game of piquet with the Queen of France, is it?”

This question originated in that happy knack that children have, when cautioned not to allude to a subject of always recurring to it, in order to announce the pains they are taking to avoid it, lest, otherwise, their arduous endeavours at obedience should not be appreciated; and, indeed, they are not the only individuals who like to impress their fellow-creatures with a due sense of the struggles and sacrifices they have made, or are making, on their account; for there are very

few persons so silly now-a-days as, like my Uncle Paulett, to

“Do good in secret, and blush to find it fame.”

We had been ordered, while the Duke of Brunswick remained with us, never to allude to the Prince Regent before him, or ask my uncle to tell us any stories about him; for as “the first gentleman of the age” had treated his sister in a manner that an honest scavenger would have been ashamed to have treated—even his wife (that only beast of burden not included in the Cruelty to Animal’s Act) the subject of course would have been a disagreeable one to him.

“Why, you puppy,” cried my uncle, flinging a little bullet of sponge biscuit at me across the table, “you know you were not to mention the Prince of Wales’s name for the next twelve months to come.”

“No; I know I am not: that’s the reason I was telling you that you are not to tell us any stories about him.”

In the midst of the universal laugh that followed this brilliant speech of mine, the door opened, and Don José walked into the room, pausing however before he seated himself, and sending a circular stare round the table as if to inquire whether we were all mad; while, on the other hand, I doubt if the Wakefield family, when indulging in hunt the slipper with the Miss Flamboroughs, “and all bloused and red” from the beatitudes of the game, could have been more

painfully abashed and astounded by the unexpected arrival of "the town ladies," than we were at this unforeseen invasion of Sir Joseph Paulett. With the exception of myself, who would not be awed by this great man, Bloom, the two O'Donnells, and Grace, instantly coloured scarlet, hung their heads, and altogether seemed as if thorns had been suddenly substituted for the stuffing of the chairs upon which they sat; and indeed, judging from their instantaneous silence, and the gloom that overshadowed their countenances, I don't think the adults bore up against this heavy blow a bit better than we did.

"Ahem! my dear uncle," said Don José, seating himself, pouring out a glass of claret, and then pushing away the dishes and glasses on each side of him, so as to make room for both his arms, which he leant horizontally upon the table, "I was dining at the mess of the —th, but their messman having got information that two magnificent turtles had just been brought to the island, I did not even wait for the roast, but galloped back immediately, that you might lose no time in telling Vatel to secure one of them."

"I'm very much obliged to you," said my uncle, in a tone however that rather implied—I wish you and your officiousness were at the d—l; "but, my dear Joseph," continued he, "it is a pity you did not wait till to-morrow morning."

"What is a turtle?" asked I, facsimileing the graceful attitude of Don José, and leaning both my

arms full-length on the table, while I stared him undauntedly in the face, as if he had been no more than an ordinary man.

"A turtle, my dear," (for I remarked before the Duc de Bouillon, Don José was always remarkably affable, indeed I might almost say gracious and condescending to me and Grace), "a turtle, my dear, is a huge sea-monster, about half the size of this table, and very good in soup; but I've got a turtle in my pocket, which I'll show you if you'll come here."

"No, you haven't," said I, politely; "for if it is half as big as this table, how could it fit in your pocket?" But still curiosity prevailed, and I walked round to the great man, repeating, however, while he continued the search in his pockets, "I don't believe it."

"Seeing is believing," responded Don José.

"Not always," retorted I, pertly; "for I see you every day, and yet I never believe you."

A perfect roar followed this *lazzi* of mine, with an "Est-elle spirituelle, cette petite?" from the Duke, which seemed to annoy Don José more even than the laugh I had raised at his expense; but he said nothing but "There!" placing before me a snuff-box made out of a large Labrador stone, in the shape of a tortoise or turtle; and then, turning to my uncle, he said :

"I've had a letter from Dosey this evening, and she, Fiametta, and the boys, will be here in a fortnight;

and then I shall start for Cadiz. Oh ! by the bye, she says Philip Vavasour, who is growing an uncommon fine boy, has had the measles, and wants change of air : so Dosey told his mother she was sure you would be delighted to see him.”

“ His mother might have been sure of that,” murmured my uncle, and a slight flush suffused his cheek ; but he merely said aloud : “ Then Philip is coming with your people ?”

“ He is.”

“ And does Theo give you any other news ?” for my uncle did not find Dosey a palatable name, and so always called Lady Paulett Theo.

“ Only an account of a great ball at —— House ; and of all people who on earth should be there but Lady Hamilton. ‘Pon my soul, I don’t know what the world will come to.” Don José enunciated this query with particular disgust ; for it is a remarkable fact that no men are so tenacious of public morals, and so censorious upon the *lèze morale* of others, as your professed *roués* and unblushing profligates.

“ Nay,” said my uncle indignantly, “ considering what eminent services she rendered our Government, and that the English, with all their *soi-disant* morality, as long as Nelson was there to gild her vice with his glory, used to invite them to their country-houses—most conjugally together !—which, indeed, I think they might as well have left alone, it would be a little too coarsely heartless even for our *haute volée* were they

suddenly to drop her the moment the halo has passed away, if the vice did not appal them while it existed. Surely, it cannot contaminate them now that it has ceased? but two years ago I began to perceive the moral re-action, as even then the once deified Lady Hamilton was beginning to be much neglected; and when this nice morality reaches its culminating point, I have no doubt she will be totally so. Had our censors of society turned their backs upon her in the plenitude of her power and the zenith of her beauty, to have upheld and consoled the woman she had injured (poor Lady Nelson), while I pitied Lady Hamilton for deserving it, I should have admired the just severity of public opinion; but any posthumous moral qualms that the world may now put forth I cannot but look upon as heartless and contemptible in the highest degree, as I do upon the Government for not having yet* provided for Nelson's last bequest to his country, his daughter Horatia, whom I have reason to know is not Lady Hamilton's daughter.

" Still, my dear uncle," said the moral Don José, with the air of a Cato, " we must consider what is due to our wives and daughters; and if such women as Lady Hamilton—"

" The best way of doing that, in my opinion," interrupted my uncle, looking with a sort of stern contempt

* *Yet!* this yet was in 1812, and has continued to 1850! What a pity the interest of it has not accumulated like that of the other national debt!

over his shoulder at his nephew, as he backed his chair and turned it slightly on one side ; “the best way of doing that, my dear Joseph, is to respect *other* men’s wives and daughters.”

Don José not appearing to relish this plan, merely shrugged his shoulders and said :

“ Well, I think it’s only in the present day there could be such a laxity of moral tone, as to tolerate such women in society.”

“ My uncle, who probably remembered better than his nephew could possibly do the peculiar circumstances attending the marriage of Don José’s mother, replied somewhat warmly :

“ I beg your pardon, my dear Joseph, I hate cant, especially that hereditary cant of always setting facts at defiance, by making out the present age, for the time being, the worst. Mrs. Oldfield for instance, in the last age, who was alternately the mistress of Mainwaring and General Churchill (nor did her immoralities stop there by any means), was not only received, but *fêtée’d* in society, and was borne to her grave by Lords Harvey and Delawarr, and Bubb Doddington, and her ashes rest with those of the mighty dead in Westminster Abbey. And some forty years before this, an archbishop—the Archbishop of Canterbury—preached Nell Gwynne’s funeral sermon ; and later again, Ann Catley, after being the talk of the town, married a general officer, and was received with open arms in the highest circles. So much, without specify-

ing the court, the bench, and the bar, for the past purity of the *Humbugences*, as I certainly think we English deserve to be called ; and if I don't greatly mistake, the first overflowing of the moral tide in England took place from private pique upon the 'lands, tenements, and messuages' of Mrs. Billington, the actress, and in the case of the unfortunate Princess of Wales, for I never heard that even a single bubble of its spray incommoded Ladies J——y, H——d, and others."

And my uncle slapped down the lid of his snuff-box in conclusion rather more energetically than usual, while Sir Joseph merely shrugged his shoulders, and said :

" *Quant à cela*, my dear uncle, I can do nothing in all that."

" Very likely," said my uncle, " and that makes me of the same opinion as Pliny's facetious friend, ' Satius est otiosum, esse quam nihil agere,'* a maxim I make you a present of, Joseph, against your next trip to Spain ; and so saying my uncle rose, and we adjourned to the other room, all except Don José, who, I am happy to say, thought his company might be better appreciated elsewhere, and therefore left us to feel his loss by the great relief it afforded us.

* It is better to be idle than to do nothing.

CHAPTER X.

No sooner had Don José departed, the jingling of coffee-spoons subsided and the Duc de Bouillon filled one *causeuse*, the two O'Donnells, Bloom Belzoni, and Grace the opposite one, on the other side of the fire, and my Uncle Paulett seated himself on the ottoman before it, than I clambered up beside him with the assistance of Mr. Waltham, who was sitting in an easy-chair next him, and, putting my arm round my uncle's neck, and giving him a sonorous kiss, I said :

" Now, dear uncle, for a story."

" Well, what is it to be ?"

" Do you know any stories about giants ?"

" No, Ma'am, I do not. I am a stupid old fellow, and can only tell you of what I have seen ; and there are no giants in these days, neither were there many in mine."

Mary O'Donnell suggested that we should hear the story of Richard the Third, which we had not yet heard."

"Is that the crook-backed Richard in my little History of England, that used to kill children in the Tower?" asked I.

"Ay, and his nephews, too. How should you like such an uncle as that, Mirry?" asked the Duke.

"Not at all; but then I shouldn't like any uncle but the one I've got;" and I stood up, and kissed and patted my uncle's nice white head, as if it had been Pomba's, at the risk of powdering my own.

"Let Uncle Paulett tell us the story about Richard the Third, Mirry, which he can't do if you tease him," said Grace.

"My child, it is scarcely a story," replied my uncle, "but merely that I have heard my grandfather say, that his grandfather knew old Lady Desmond, who lived till one hundred and ten, and that she remembered when a very young girl, having danced with Richard the Third, who so far from his being hump-backed as history has handed him down to us, was one of the handsomest and most agreeable men about court, and had no other defect than the reputation of a withered arm, which not being visible was believed or not, according to the inclination of those who heard it."

"Oh! will you tell us, Sir George, about your visit to Mrs. Bunbury's when Goldsmith was there, and

Garrick, and that beautiful Mary Hornock that he was in love with," asked Bloom Belzoni.

"Nay, and that was in love with him, too," cried my uncle; "for as General Gwyn can't hear me, and perhaps poor Goldsmith can, I am sure his spirit will soar and expand into a higher and wider beatitude every time that truth is confided to the elements to mingle with the universal spirit of nature, and add harmony to sound, brightness to light, and perfume to the flowers—those poor flowers that he used to scatter so unmercifully around him wherever he went, as if his thoughts were too luxuriant, and needed this kind of thinning. Poor Goldsmith!"

"Who was Goldsmith?" asked I.

"He was," said my uncle, walking over to one of the *marqueterie secrétaires*, unlocking it, and taking from one of the pigeon-holes a little book with a fine flaring cover of blue and gold flowers, both laid on thickly and in patches, like the decoration of those toys peculiar to booths at a fair; "he was a most, if not *the* most good-natured man (not excepting his own) that ever existed, and was the idol of every child that came in his way."

"Then I suppose he was like you," interrupted I.

"Ah! I wish I were like him, Mirry; but here is a little book he gave me for my poor sister Mary the Christmas I met him at Bolton. And see," continued my uncle, showing me the title-page, but not letting

the book out of his own hand, “here is what he wrote on it, and in a fine round hand, too, that she might be able to read it :”

“ TO MISS MARY PAULETT,

“ FROM HER BROTHER GEORGE’S FRIEND,

“ OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

“ Bolton,
“ December 25th, 1774.”

“ Oh ! Grace,” cried I, clapping my hands, it’s

“ Goody Two Shoes !”

“ Did Goldsmith write Goody Two Shoes ?” asked Grace.

“ It is supposed that he did,” said my uncle, “ but he did not tell me so when he gave it to me, and I never saw him after we left Bolton ; for, poor fellow, he died soon after, I verily believe gnawed to the soul, and worried to death, by debts the amount of which was so trifling—two thousand pounds I fancy, or something of that sort—that it seems to me a disgrace to his friends not to have hit upon some expedient to raise the money for him without offending his pride, or wounding his delicacy. I think both Johnson and the Bunburys would, had they known their amount ; and to his credit be it spoken, I often heard ‘The Captain in Lace,’ as the Horneck girls used to call

their brother, say that he would have sold his commission rather than poor Goldsmith should have let two beggarly thousand pounds break so fine a heart. Had he known of it, Beauclerc might easily have done it, if he pleased, through Goldsmith's admirers in the higher circles ; but then Beauclerc had no heart, and with him no doubt, as with most of the world, the mere fact of a man's being in difficulties was the best proof that he deserved to be so.

“ Cradock, it is true, did originate the idea of re-publishing Goldsmith's works by subscription, to give his aristocratic admirers an opportunity of testifying their golden opinions of him ; but unfortunately this idea was conceived too late, and executed too slowly ; so that poor Goldsmith died in the meantime. A lesson to you, my dear children, that when you mean to serve, if you would really save, you should never delay for a single moment. The longer evil intentions are delayed the better, for then they may chance to die in embryo, and never become actions ; but to postpone good ones till their fruition is rendered useless or impossible is to swindle Providence who has intrusted you with one of its most divine attributes, the power of changing sorrow into joy.”

“ And where is your sister Mary now ?” replied I.

“ In heaven,” replied my uncle.

“ You have a snuff-box, have you not, Sir, made out of Goldsmith's hawthorn !” asked Mary O'Donnell.

“ I have, dear,” said my uncle, again going to the

same cabinet, and opening one of the drawers, which he left half open ; and bringing back a round, brownish-looking, wooden box—not however flat, but like a cake of shaving soap, lined with gold, and having a golden lid—with an inscription, describing the day and year it was cut from the hawthorn-tree at Lissøy, namely, June the 14th, 1794, with this couplet from the “Deserted Village” round it :

“The hawthorn tree with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made.”

While we were all looking at the box, my uncle looked at the fire, and sighed ; and then, stroking his chin, he said :

“But I’m forgetting that my little friend Bloom, asked me to take her back to Bolton with me. Well, I must first ask my father and mother’s leave—for you must know I was only sixteen at that time, and it was as a great favour I was taken myself ; but I had been ill with the hooping-cough, and our house in Soho Square was to be painted,—people lived in Soho Square in those days,—and my poor mother, who was always clever at inventing pretexts to give any of us pleasure, said it would make me ill again, if I remained in it ; and as she had got an invitation from Little Comedy, as they used to call young Mrs. Bunbury, for all the children to spend the Christmas at Bolton, surely she might take *one*, as my brothers and sisters were to pass the Christmas with my grandmother.

" My father at first opposed this ; but Sir Charles Bunbury happening to drop in while the matter was under discussion, he joined forces with my mother and me, and so we carried the day. Well, it's now the 15th of December, 1774," (and here my uncle sighed again, but suddenly rousing himself, he added), " and bitterly cold ; so we must stir the fire to warm ourselves, before we set out upon our long journey into Suffolk ;" and he suited the action to the word, while we all gathered round him, like a cluster of bees on the outside of a hive. " Mother," resumed he, with his dear, kind, playful eyes looking from one to the other of us, and lowering his voice to a whisper, " may Bloom Belzoni go with us down to Bolton ? She is a very good little girl, and a particular friend of mine, and is so reasonable, that I'm sure she won't crowd up the coach with too many bandboxes and jiggamarees ; and, between you and me, mother, I think she'll be very useful, for she hems and marks pocket-handkerchiefs beautifully ; and with this weather I think we are likely to have colds in our heads, so goodness knows how many pocket-handkerchiefs we may want ; therefore, as I said before, she will be extremely useful.

" Oh, fie ; for shame, George ; I am shocked to think that you should invite a young lady to make a sempstress of her ; where's your gallantry ? You really are not fit for polite company ; and I'm sorry now I ordered that changeable silk coat for you at Filby's, for

silks and satins are far too delicate wear for young bears.'

"‘ Oh, mother, mother, only forgive me this once, and I’ll turn the bear out of my menagerie, and be as polite to pretty Bloom Belzoni, as if I were a birth-night beau, and she as fine a lady as Lady Fanny Tiffany, and didn’t know how to hem a pocket-handkerchief.’ ”

Highly amused at this San Carlino dialogue by one person, we all laughed aloud, not excepting Mr. Waltham ; while our fat friend from the sofa cried :

" Bravo ! bravo ! My dear Sir George, your good lady mother was right, and you too.”

" If I’m right, I shan’t be left ; so make haste, Bloom, for the coach is at the door.

" Well, Ma’am, in those days,” continued my uncle, “ it was the fashion to drive four-in-hand, and so my father was to drive us down himself to Bolton. I think, taking it all in all, perhaps this was the happiest day of my life ; for I had intimated to my uncle, Pallisser, a brother of my mother’s, who was my god-father, and after whom I was called George, that any ‘ little accounts’ he might have to settle in the way of Christmas Boxes, I hoped he would do so before I left town, as I should not be in the way of profiting by his generosity on Christmas Day. My poor uncle Pallisser !—no one was quicker in taking these sort of hints, or had a more munificent manner of showing

that he did so ; two excellent qualities, you will allow, young ladies in an uncle."

" Yes, that you have proved to us every day since we came," said Grace.

" Bravo ! bravo ! *bonne petite !*" again burst from the Duke, who, being in the habit of eking out his compliments to my Aunt Marley with florid quotations, added :

" And truths divine come mended from those lips."

My uncle merely drew Grace towards him, kissed her, and continued his narration.

" Well, the result of these hints were, that the night before we left town for Bolton a beautiful Tompion (Tompion, you must know, my dears, was the great watch-maker at that time) came for me, of purple enamel, with my initials in brilliants on the back. My changeable silk coat (the first I'd ever had) had also come home punctually, and was packed up ; and I had succeeded in coaxing my mother out of a pair of ruffles, so that I thought myself, and consequently was, the happiest fellow in the world. It is true, that there was no possible means of grinding a sword out of my father, who said, that in three years I was to join the 14th Light Dragoons, and then I'd have swords enough.

" This certainly was a drawback to my perfect happiness, when I came to dwell upon the splendours

of my approaching appearance at Bolton, for at that time there was no such thing as a perfectly spruce blade without a sword. However, again my poor dear mother stepped in with the compensations of a sky-blue cloth great coat, lined with fur, braided with gold, and faced with scarlet, which one would fancy like a footman's livery now, but which then was considered, not only by myself and my own family in particular, but by the world in general, all to nothing the finest part of the affair, not excepting a three-cornered gold-laced hat, for which my mother had lent me three of her own corking pins, that it might be cocked the more jauntily. The journey seemed interminable, and would have been thought still more so in these days of quick posting ; though if looking at my watch, my beautiful blue Tompion, could have expedited it, we should have got to the end of it in half the time ; for upon an average, every five minutes I produced that treasure, announcing that it was such and such o'clock by *me*, and of course it was the same for everybody else, even if they hadn't a Tompion !—a fact which at that time I totally overlooked.

“ However, at eleven o'clock of the forenoon of Christmas Eve, we drove up the avenue at Bolton, on the hall steps of which stood a group composed of Mrs. Bunbury ; her sister, the beautiful Mary Horneck, the Jessamy Bride, as they called her ; Bunbury ; Lord and Lady Tyreconnel : Mr. and Mrs. Tremaine ; George Hanger ; Lord Harrington ; a Mr.

and Mrs. Mauleverer ; and another personage in a black silk coat, wringing wet, at whom the whole party were laughing vociferously, while Lady Tyrconnell was warbling in that nightingale voice of hers :

“ ‘ Oh ! dear, what can the matter be ?
Dear, dear, what can the matter be ? ’

which was then a manuscript song, not published for some years after. But when I said the whole party were laughing at this poor half-drowned personage, I should have excepted one, which was Mary Horneck, who was clasping her pretty little white hands together, and saying to this river-god :

“ ‘ Pray, pray, Doctor, do go and take off those wet things, or you’ll get your death of cold.’

At this, the Doctor coloured slightly, but seemed much pleased as he glanced for less than half an instant at the beautiful speaker and then said :

“ ‘ I will go directly and change my things, for really I am like a water-spaniel, and I shall spoil these ladies’ brocades, as I fear I have done this one already.’

“ This was addressed to my mother, who had just alighted, and a few drops from the speaker’s coat had certainly fallen on her dress.

“ ‘ Nay,’ said she, turning round with a bow and a smile, ‘ Dr. Goldsmith can only embellish whatever he touches ; and I shall now prize this suit so highly, that I shall never part with it.’

“‘Madam,’ stammered Goldsmith, bowing and blushing, but he could get no further; however, he paid my mother a most charming compliment that night at supper, which she was wont most indignantly to maintain, against all the ready wits of the day, had lost nothing from being so long in his possession,

“‘Oh! dear, what can the matter be?’

again sang Lady Tyrconnell, by way of interrogation, as the drenched poet retreated into the house.

“‘Why,’ said Lord Harrington, stepping forward, ‘the matter is this, we were walking just now by the fish-pond at the other side of the maze, when a discussion arose as to its depth; the greater number were for the profound, three or four for the shallow, and among the latter, Miss Mary Horneck. Dr. Goldsmith inclined to her opinion, and indeed,’ continued Lord Harrington, looking archly at the Jessamy Bride, ‘one cannot be surprised at any man’s soon being over head and ears where Miss Mary Horneck is concerned; the consequence was, that the Doctor affirmed that the pond was not so deep, but that were anything of value thrown into it, he would get it out without wetting himself; thus dared, I flung in a guinea, *ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*;’ and here Lord Harrington again cast an arch look at Mary Horneck; ‘so in trying to fish it out, the poor Doctor’s foot slipped, and he flung himself in, but brought

back the guinea, which he vowed he'd keep for his pains, having, he said, plenty of objects to bestow all similar coin upon, he would bring out as many more as I chose to fling in; but I thought our foolish partnership about the pond had been sufficiently liquidated, and knowing that Dr. Goldsmith was the last man in the world to wish to throw a damp upon a Christmas party, I thought it right to rest satisfied with the prowess he had already evinced.' Mary Horneck had vanished at Lord Harrington's second look.

"Lady Tyrconnell laughed at the history of poor Goldsmith's misfortunes; and soon after, the party entered the house, and dispersed in different directions; but as I and my mother were going up stairs to our rooms, conducted by Mrs. Bunbury, the latter said to the housekeeper, whom she met coming out of the room that had been prepared for my mother: 'Moffat, pray send a hot posset to Dr. Goldsmith's room, will you, immediately, for he's got wet through.'

"'What! another Ma'am? because Miss Horneck came herself, and ordered one for him not ten minutes ago, and he's had that one.'

"'Oh, very well,' said Mrs. Bunbury with a laugh, 'I'm glad the poor Doctor has not been neglected.'

"I was afraid I should be the last down to dinner, and was frightened when I heard the clock strike three; nevertheless, one's first chameleon coat was not to be jumped into as one would into a bath. So after

Lawrence (my father's man) had held a glass at my back sufficiently long for me to be perfectly sure that the coat had not a wrinkle in it, I ran down hastily into my mother's room to steal some perfume for my handkerchief; and, as I was coming out again, I heard an opposite door open, delighted to think that after all I should not be the last, I paused to see who my fellow laggard was; it was Goldsmith, beating me hollow, in a magnificent coat of bloom velvet (so you see he wore your livery, Bloom,) and redolent of *bouquet de jasmin*, with which he quite embalmed the air; and I have had a latent *tendresse* for that perfume ever since, and always tell Grant to put jessamine pomatum on my hair.

"There was something wrong about his sword-knot, which he still lingered to settle; and indeed I must do him the justice to say that although I had always heard Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and indeed all the men who came to my father's (with the exception of Burke) rate him for a sloven, I never saw any maccaroni, as they were then called, or dandy as we should call them now, appear so scrupulously punctilious about his dress. When the sword-knot was got right (though it never kept so), I went up to him, and said :

"'I hope, Sir, you don't feel any ill effects from your accident?'

"'None whatever, I thank you, my little master; the only sufferer on the occasion is my black silk coat,

which has lost its ruffles ; and I confess I am sorry for it, as I possessed but two pairs, and those happened to be the best of the two.'

"I tried to suggest the consolation that they might still be found in the vicinity of the pond ; but Goldsmith shook his head, for the use of experience to most persons is to teach them to despair of everything, by which means alone they may be numbered among the blessed, and are never disappointed. We then went down to dinner, where Goldsmith was much confused to find the meal had been some little time commenced ; and began stammering out his regrets, and apologies, for being the last.

"'Extremes meet you know, Doctor,' said Lord Harrington with his usual good-breeding ; 'and that fully accounts for the first man of the age being last.'

"This well-timed, and well-merited compliment put poor Goldsmith completely at his ease ; and the dinner passed off delightfully, at least to me, as Goldsmith, who called me his fellow-culprit, insisted upon my sitting next to him ; and before the following day we grew to be exceeding great friends, what with a joint-stock cheating partnership at Pope Joan, and a mutual favouring of each other in the bandaging at blind man's buff, wherein, I'm sorry to say, I very meanly more than once, when Goldsmith was blind man, pushed Mary Horneck in the way of being caught, in order to save myself ; all the others cried shame, and

fair play, the Jessamy Bride louder than any one, but Goldsmith said nothing, and therefore I suppose that he thought all I had done was for the best.

" My poor mother seemed not a little proud of the sort of fancy the Doctor had taken to me, and I was never tired of expatiating upon the downright affection I had conceived for him ; so that that very night, as I kissed my mother on taking leave of her at her own door, I informed her with much sympathy (for what should I have done, if it had been my own case ?) of the loss of Goldsmith's best ruffles.

" ' Dear me, poor fellow, I'm sorry to hear that ; and Heaven only knows what they cost him,' said my mother, and then after reflecting for a moment, she said, ' I'll tell you what, George, depend upon it he don't know one sort of lace from another, and will never remember the pattern. So I'll give you a pair of your father's best point ones, and to-morrow morning, you shall get up early, and pretend you have found them by the pond ; for which reason you must go and dip them into it before you take them to him, for you must not for the world let him suspect that we are taking such a liberty with him as to give him a pair of ruffles, as that would offend him. Poverty being the most painfully tender of all wounds, the least want of skill, in trying to heal it, only irritates past endurance.'

" ' Mother,' cried I, hugging her with all the energy of the bear, which I had so recently promised to expel

from my *ménagerie*, ‘you are a dear, good, little woman ; and I only hope you will one day have as much reason to love and be proud of your son, as he has of his mother.’

“‘Take care, my dear,’ said my father, now coming to the door to join the debate ; ‘take care the Doctor don’t find you out.’

“For a moment my mother seemed undecided, and then turning to me, she said :

“‘You are quite sure, George, that he said they were his best ruffles !’

“‘Quite sure.’

“‘Oh ! then they must have been *point d’Alençon*, so we are quite safe,’ said my mother, going over to a chair upon which lay a brown velvet coat of my father’s, all ready prepared for church the next day, with a very magnificent pair of ruffles, which she deliberately untacked.

“My father had quietly re-seated himself by the fire, and before a table, covered with numerous Parliamentary papers and letters from his constituents.

“‘You won’t mind, shall you, my dear, going without point ruffles till after church to-morrow?’ said my mother to him, as she put the ones she had just taken off into my hand.

“‘Not in the least, my dear, I shall have all the less on my hands,’ rejoined my father, with a groan, as he broke the seal of another letter ; and again kissing my mother, I shut the door. The next morning before it

was well light found me at the pond, where having given the ruffles a cold and muddy bath, I waited till my Tompion announced that it was half-past six, and then thinking it better to finish the business before there were any prying or prating servants about, I went and knocked gently at Goldsmith's door: 'Come in,' said he, but not in a sleepy voice proceeding from the bed. Early as it was he was up, and writing away very fast by a consumptive-looking over-night's fire, and, notwithstanding the cold of the season, he had a wet towel wisped round his head, which he hastily removed on seeing me, and this gave me an opportunity of remarking what a splendid head he had, which no one would have ever suspected from the abominable wig he generally wore.

"'God bless my soul, my dear Master George, is that you?' said he, laying down his pen.

"'I have to beg you a thousand pardons, Doctor, for intruding upon you at such an unseasonable hour; but the fact is, I had a strong notion (as I told you yesterday) that your ruffles would be found, if properly looked for. So I got up a little earlier and went myself in quest of them, and sure enough, after a little close hunting, I found them only a little the worse for their lengthened swim.'

"Goldsmith's eyes positively sparkled as he received the wet rags, and I doubt if I had brought him the news of his being appointed to a sinecure of a thousand

a-year, whether he could have looked more delighted, or expressed more gratitude.

“‘ My dear Master George, well now how kind of you, and to get up on purpose, too ; really, my dear young friend, I am more obliged to you than I can say ;’ and he shook me by both hands. ‘ You don’t know,’ he resumed, ‘ the service you have done me, for I should be ashamed to tell you what those ruffles cost me ; and to go and lose them directly after I had bought them, was exactly like paying even twice as much again for them ; dear me, I am so grateful to you ; and how singular that you should have found them,—one of the most extraordinary and fortunate events that ever happened to me : what can I ever do to show you how much I feel your kindness ?’

“‘ I am sure, Sir, you have thanked me a great deal too much already,’ said I ; ‘ but if you would write your name in my copy of “The Deserted Village,” I should be so proud.’

“‘ No, not in your copy, but in all my works, if you think them worth having, and will accept them from me ; and I must not forget your little sister, Mary,’ said he ; and walking over to a chair upon which stood an old black pormanteau, and fishing up from its depths that very identical copy of “Goody Two Shoes” which I showed you to-night, and bringing it to the table, he wrote in it what you have seen, murmuring as

he did so, ‘A pretty, gentle name is that of Mary ; may all who bear it know no other tears !’*

“ It was now my turn to lavish my thanks, and I felt so grateful that I had no difficulty in doing so.

“ ‘ Not another word, my dear Master George,’ said he, cutting me short, ‘ remember the ruffles ; but as you seemed destined to come to my assistance you could render me another service, that is if I have not already given you a surfeit of ‘ Deserted Villages ?’

“ ‘ If they were all like Auburn, that would not be easy, Sir.’

“ ‘ I am afraid you are a flatterer, young Sir ; well, never mind, no one is quite perfection, and a lucky thing too, or else the greater part of the world might consider themselves most shamefully defrauded ; but, my dear Master George,’ continued he, gathering up the written papers that were strewing the table, and locking them into the old portmanteau, ‘ what I want you to do for me is, to come with me to a village, about a mile from this, before breakfast, for either before or after church, I shall not be able to manage it ; the fact is’ and he lowered his voice as if he had been revealing treason, ‘ a poor girl that I met yesterday, when we were all walking on the high road, told me such a piteous tale of her mother who had had her arm broken by a loom falling upon it, and afterwards amputated, and who consequently was out of work,

* Mary, in Hebrew, means a tear.

and worse still, had not even any old linen for bandages, that I have been uncomfortable ever since, for I did not like to give her money before them all, because Dr. Johnson, who is very kind to me, has put it into Mrs. Bunbury's head that I am extravagant, and do things that I have no right to do,—for that is one of the delights of poverty, it becomes, or at least is made, a fault and a reproach to help one's fellow-creatures; but you see, my dear Master George, the case is now quite altered, I have got my Lord Harrington's guinea, and as I told him I should keep it to give it to those who wanted it, it would be unpardonable in me not to take it to this poor Jenny Croft—for that's her name, I wrote it down in my pocket-book; and if you will come with me, they will think we have only been to take a walk before breakfast, and won't ask me any questions.'

"With the greatest pleasure, Sir,' said I.

"Thank you, my good Master George, thank you; and Goldsmith began to dress, first of all, however, shaking out the wet ruffles, and hanging them on a chair before the fire to dry: 'Pon my word,' said he, 'although they are all muddy, some how or other they look to me even handsomer than they were before.'

"Oh, you know, Sir,' said I, fearing he might examine them too minutely and suspect something, 'they wash point in coffee very often, so perhaps the slight tinge of mud may have improved them.'

“ ‘ Ah, like enough,’ said he, and he gave the ruffles another shake.

“ ‘ If you would allow me, Sir,’ I said, ‘ I think I had better take them to my mother’s woman, and she will wash them properly for you, and they would be ready for you to put on to go to church.’

“ ‘ My dear Master George, how kind you are: I shall be exceedingly obliged to you; but I fear my poor black silk coat is entirely spoilt,’ added he, taking it up with a sigh, and at the same time putting aside two of four shirts that lay on a chair next the one off of which he had taken the coat, and muttering: ‘ Ay, I must not forget to take linen to that poor woman,’ he flung the coat down.

“ ‘ Nay, Sir,’ said I, ‘ if you would allow me also to take your coat, I’ve no doubt Patty will be able to make it look quite smart again, for she often works miracles on my father’s coats; and as my mother never stirs from home without old linen enough to supply an hospital, it will be a pity to take those good shirts of yours, which indeed would not do so well for bandages as if they were worse.’

“ ‘ Oh ! I don’t know how to thank you—you really are so kind,’ said he, again shaking me by both hands, as, not waiting for further permission, I seized the coat, and was about to leave the room with it. ‘ And you will be still kinder, my dear Master George,’ said he, before I closed the door, ‘ and not mention our

going to see this poor woman to any one ; though, as I told you before, it is Lord Harrington's money ; but all the world don't know this, and things get about so, and I shall have nothing but lectures when I get back to town.'

"I promised the strictest secrecy, and went in quest of Patty with the shrivelled coat and the wet ruffles. She assured me that sponging with lavender water and ironing would restore the one, and soap and water the other ; and having given me a plentiful supply of old linen, I returned to Goldsmith with the good news. Never shall I forget the beaming expression of his face : I could not have imagined that ugliness could have been suddenly lit up into such beauty ; but I suppose it was that it looked heavenly, there being more joy in it over the recovery of this one lost coat, than he would have evinced at ninety-nine new ones. As he was now dressed, we set out to the little village, the name of which I forgot, but it was barely a mile from Bolton ; and in a wretched hovel, stretched upon a miserable flock bed, lay the poor old woman, groaning from the pain of her amputated arm ; while her daughter was on her knees, before the large old chimney, down which all the winds of heaven came, trying with her mouth to do the duty of a bellows, and blow a few sticks of churlish green wood into a flame.

"'Here, my good woman,' said Goldsmith, ad-

vancing to the bed, and holding out the guinea, ‘a good gentleman, my Lord Harrington, has sent you this. I could not give your daughter anything, when she asked me yesterday; not from want of pity for you, but because I had not got it; and this kind young gentleman here has brought you plenty of linen: so though I can do nothing for you, you see God has raised you up other friends, both willing and able to serve you.’

“‘ May God Almighty bless you, Sir !’ said the poor woman, rightly surmising to whom she really owed this relief.

“‘ What does your mother take ?’ asked Goldsmith of the girl.

“‘ She have only took a little grule, Sir : the doctor due say that she should have woine tue ; but wheere be she to get woine ?” said the girl in her Suffolk twang.

“ After asking her a few more questions, we went away, Goldsmith telling her he would see her again. As we returned through the village, the sun burst forth in all his splendour ; and it struck me at the time that the sun must put on an additional glory when he shines on such men as Goldsmith.

“ When we regained the high road to Bolton, I was stepping out in seven-league-boot style, my beloved Tompion having informed me that it only wanted a quarter to nine, when my companion suddenly stopped and looking wistfully up at a little road-side alehouse,

where swung a faded sign, under which was written, in once-gold letters :

“‘THE OLD WHITE HORSE.’

And sure enough very old the poor fellow looked, while above him protruded a withered bush.

“‘My dear Master George,’ said Goldsmith, hesitating and colouring, as if he had been confiding to me his intention of robbing a house, and begging me to assist him, ‘I—I—just want to go in here; I shan’t be a minute.’

“Not having been interdicted, I followed.

“‘Landlord,’ said Goldsmith to mine host of the Old White Horse, who was smoking his pipe in the wide chimney-corner, opposite to an elderly dame, who sat reading the Bible, and who, I suppose, was the Old Grey Mare, ‘do you happen to have any good old wine?’

“‘Ay, that due I, thof my place bent none of your foine taverns loike, to luke at.’

“‘Well, then, quick; a bottle of your best sack, and another of port.’

“‘The landlord put down his pipe, stood up, and began rummaging in all his pockets; but suddenly stopped, saying :

“‘Dang it, I forgot my missus due keep the kay. Dame, hand over the kay of the cellar.’

“In a few minutes, he returned with a couple of

bottles, whose cobwebs and flakes of mildew stood sponsors for their antiquity. The dame having carefully dusted them, and wrapped them in two half-sheets of an old number of ‘The Hue and Cry,’ Goldsmith tendered a guinea to the host, which this time certainly was no one else’s, but one of poor Oliver Goldsmith’s own hard-earned guineas. No wonder, then, that he looked so confused and ashamed; for there is an ease about spending other people’s money which we never can attain to in disbursing our own. The landlord gave him ten shillings in change, which, however, I remarked he did not put into his pocket, but kept in his hand with one of the bottles, while I took charge of the other.

“‘Come, my dear Master George,’ said he, as we left The White Horse, ‘or we shall be late;’ and he set off running, and I of course with him, at the speed of a school-boy who had just robbed an orchard, and heard the owner at his heels, and we never drew breath till we got to Jenny Croft’s cottage, which we did not enter, Goldsmith merely giving her daughter the wine, and adding in a whisper not intended for me to hear, as he poked the remaining ten shillings into her hand: ‘There, and when this wine is gone you can get more at ‘The White Horse.’

“As we reached the old oak entrance-hall at Bolton, the first breakfast-bell was only beginning to ring.

“‘Come, that is famous,’ cried Goldsmith, ‘we can get back to our rooms and they never will even know

that we have been out.' I accompanied him as far as his, where I don't know which of us was most delighted to find that Patty had been as good as her word, or indeed, rather better ; for on the newly-made bed was laid, ' in all the pride of beauty, and in beauty's pride,' the black silk coat, which had been 'laid up in lavender' to some purpose, for what with the ruffles again in all their glory, it really did look as Goldsmith said, ' even better than before its ducking really,' said he, gazing at it with a sort of admiring tenderness.

" ' I am very much obliged to Mrs. Patty ; and will you, my dear Master George, tell her so, and give her this from me ?'

" The this, was another guinea ; oh ! the bad taste of gold, it never will stay with people like Goldsmith, no doubt from envy, as I suppose it is afraid of being out-shone, whereas it certainly runs no such risk in the coffers of the selfish and the worldly, where it delighteth to dwell.

" ' Indeed, my dear Doctor, I cannot do any such thing, it is against the law ; you would not wish poor Patty to lose her place I'm sure, and my mother would turn her off directly if she found out that she had ever taken money from any one ; and if you give her this, I shall make it a point to tell my mother, though I'm sure Patty would not take it.'

" ' Oh ! but she has done so much for me—saved me six guineas ; for the coat, though a new one, was quite spoilt till she restored it, and really—'

"‘ And really, my dear Doctor,’ said I, interrupting him, ‘ you must not think of giving her anything for having rendered you this trifling service, unless you want to do her an injury.’

“‘ Heaven forbid !’ said Goldsmith.

“‘ There, Doctor, there goes the second bell, and we shall be late for breakfast after all,’ said I, hurrying off, to give Patty timely notice that I should not only tell my mother, but would shoot her ! if any of Dr. Goldsmith’s guineas were found straying in her pockets.

“ During the whole of the breakfast, I had to undergo Goldsmith’s public thanks and commendations, for my kindness in finding his ruffles ; and, I’m sorry to say it, but that mother of mine must have been a most artful woman, for she looked as innocent all the time as if I had really been the paragon of finders that the Doctor described, and *she* had never haggled and bargained with Madame Clarisseaus of ‘ The Golden Pillow’ in Pall-Mall, to get those identical ruffles for five shillings a-yard less for her own lawful husband, who was then despatching a very substantial segment of a swan-pie, in a pair of plain Mechlin ones, though happily not with less appetite on that account.

“ The church being about half a mile distant, after breakfast, carriages came to the door to convey the elders thither, while the younger members of the party preferred walking. Goldsmith was certainly old enough to know better, but somehow or other he also was among the pedestrians ; and, as no one else had the

civility to do so, he was of course obliged to offer his arm to Mary Horneck, which she accepted, with as much alacrity, grace, and good-humour, as if it had been that of the youngest and handsomest maccaroni that ever frequented the Mall. The bells were ringing; the village church had on its holiday gear, and a smile actually seemed to play upon the old walls, wreathed as they were in the festive greenery of holly and red berries. On entering the porch, Goldsmith released Mary Horneck's arm; yet was it from abstraction, or that she really looked so like a Jessamy Bride I know not, but he was walking straight on to the altar, when the parish beadle tapped him on the shoulder and pointed to the open door of Mr. Bunbury's curtained and escutcheoned pew. But so it is, with every sweet illusion that either hope, or imagination, or even memory—the truest of all—conjures up around us; we no sooner advance one step in the poetical Elysium, than some parish beadle of a reality taps us on the shoulder and brings us back to the common-place prose of existence. Poor Goldsmith, thus admonished by rude reality, turned from the altar, and followed Mary Horneck into the pew, holding his hat before his face. I have heard of persons trying to get to heaven by tacking themselves on to the skirts of others, and I suppose that is the reason I knelt so close to Goldsmith on that day; however, he soon distanced me in the journey, for he reached the goal before the following Christmas; and I am still here, while some others of his contemporaries

are neither here nor there, especially his vile traducer, the reptile Kenrick.

"Upon our return home, we found a very agreeable addition to our party, for Garrick, who had been staying at Lord Bristol's I think, or at least somewhere in the neighbourhood, had come over to Bolton. Before dinner, walking was proposed, but I remarked that by tacit consent we avoided the pond, and at length found ourselves in the hot-house, or as Garrick said, rubbing his hands on entering: 'Ah! there is some sense in this, and I vote that now we have arrived at Naples, we remain,' and seizing a large flat root basket he laid himself down or rather curled himself up in it, and with the aid of a brown silk shawl of Mrs. Mauleverer's, simulated a *lazzarone* to such perfection, that those who had been at Naples instinctively looked round for the *chiaja* and the Bay and those who had not, began to pant with heat, till we all burst into one vociferous 'Bravo!' while 'Bravissimo! Homo miracoloso! genio universale!' burst from Lord Harrington. Unfortunately, in my impatience to watch the expression, or rather the total absence of all expression in Garrick's face, for there he lay like an inert mass of animal life luxuriating to seed under a meridian sun, I upset a very rare and beautiful azerita,* then in full flower. Garrick started to his feet, and beginning to shiver and tremble, while the half-petrified tears rolled

* A species of Persian plum.

one at a time, large and slowly, down his frost-bitten face, we again all caught the infection, our teeth not only beginning to chatter, but some of us actually sneezing. But seeing my consternation over the scattered blossoms, and thinking he had iced us enough, considering we had to inhale a little real frost before we got back to the house, he slapped me on the shoulder, and said :

“ ‘ Pooh, boy, never fret at such a trifle ; you’ve only to come away and leave it, and the gardener will swear it’s Goldsmith’s handy-work.’

“ ‘ I suppose, Mr. Garrick, you want to turn my brain, by making me believe that any work of my boy’s could ever be taken for Dr. Goldsmith’s,’ said my mother.

“ ‘ Ah, Davey, how am I to thank you for procuring me such a compliment from such a lady, to say nothing of giving me the opportunity of hearing it ?’

“ I have no doubt that Goldsmith here alluded to the £60 Garrick had lent him to come down to Bolton, on the strength of a comedy to be written ; for Goldsmith’s was not one of those narrow natures whose pride consists in making a secret of obligations he was not too proud to receive ; indeed, for my own part, I always suspect that those persons who affect the independence of preferring any amount of misery to accepting assistance from their fellow-creatures, are merely those sort of sordid dispositions that cannot bear to assist others in their distress, otherwise the

proceeding would appear more natural and less humiliating to them ; for, after all, they are only giving their neighbour the opportunity of obeying one of our Saviour's most express commandments, and also of doing their duty in that state of life into which it has pleased God to call them.

“ However, there might be a sort of spurious and mistaken virtue in this rigid independence did they act up to their theory, which they do not ; for such persons seem to consider with Tartufe, that *pécher en secret n'est pas pécher, ce n'est que l'éclat qui fait le crime* ; and therefore deem that borrowing to any amount (and even never repaying it), or accepting any species of obligation as long as it is *not known*, does not in the least derogate from their dignity, or humiliate their pride. I own, that there cannot be too scrupulous a delicacy and secrecy maintained touching all obligations conferred, whether pecuniary or other, only the secrecy should be on the part of the *obliged*, and not on that of the *obliged*. The person who is not too proud to accept a service, should not be too mean (for it is meanness and not pride) to acknowledge it.”

“ But don't you think, Sir,” said Mr. Waltham, “ that it is a want of proper pride to burden one's friends with one's necessities, instead of making a strong and persevering appeal to one's own energies to work one's self out of them ?”

“ Most certainly I do, Sir, and that man, woman,

or child, who indolently prefers help to labour, that is, who would rather meanly tax others than exert themselves, is a contemptible reptile. But, my dear Sir, there are cases, and God knows we have seen plenty of them lately among the poor *émigrés*, where the best blood of France is ready to stoop to any drudgery, however menial ; (and by so doing, have really ennobled themselves far more than they have ever been ennobled by all the titles and lands that have come down to them from the time of Clovis and Charlemagne) ; and yet pray what were they to do, when they could not get even these menial employments ? I'll tell you what they did ; they proved themselves Christians in an inverse ratio ; for Christianity is an *all*-sided, and not a *one*-sided remedy. They let others do unto them what they would have done unto others, had their positions been reversed ; that is, they accepted with quite as much benevolence and grace, as they would have given ; and, indeed, to receive well, requires even a larger, deeper, and purer benevolence than to give : the latter is often but the superfluous overflowing of the luxurious fountain which wealth has created for pleasure ; but the former requires some effort to draw the limpid flood from its profound and unsullied source. Besides, my dear Sir, if none should be helped, who ought to help ? and what becomes of the parable of the Good Samaritan ?”

“ I'll tell you what has become of the Good Samaritan,” said the Duc de Bouillon, actually rousing

himself into a perpendicular attitude, "this is what he did only a month ago. There is a certain Comte de— (no matter what) here, and his family, who call themselves Monsieur and Madame La Tour. Well, Madame and her daughters are first-rate embroidresses, and wanted to open a *magazin de broderie*, but that would take several hundred pounds, and where were they to get them? Luckily, one day Monsieur la Tour fell in with the Good Samaritan, whose name in the present day is Sir George Paul—"

"Tut, tut, my dear Duke; let me finish my story about Goldsmith," interrupted my uncle.

"Excusez, mon Général; mais chacun à son tour," resumed the Duke. "Well, this anonymous Good Samaritan could not afford, or whether he could afford them or not, he did not like to run the risk of wounding Monsieur de la Tour's pride, by offering him the number of hundreds required for his commercial enterprise; so what does he do, but asks him to breakfast one morning, to talk over his projects; and, in the course of conversation, tells him with a lachrymose face that he is sorry it will not be in his power to lend him the sum he requires. Soon after, one of the Good Samaritan's accomplices was ordered to come into the room (quite accidentally, of course) with some lottery tickets.

"'Bless me, my dear La Tour,' cries the Good Samaritan, 'this seems to be quite providential. Suppose we try our luck for the nonce?'"

"La Tour shook his head, and said he had no right to risk even a few pounds on such a chance.

"'Well, then,' said the Samaritan, 'I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll buy one ticket for myself, and one for your little Eugénie; but mind, if hers should by good fortune come up a good round prize, she must repay me the price of the ticket; for I have no idea of giving to the rich,' said the Good Samaritan, buttoning up his pockets, and giving himself all the airs of a miser, which however sate so awkwardly on him, that La Tour, who was not the least deceived by him (as he told me) could not help laughing; but while he laughed, the tears also came into his eyes; for his heart had told him what the Good Samaritan was about.

"'Now,' said the latter, after he had bought the tickets, taking down the numbers of both; 'fair play's a jewel, so you keep yours, and I'll keep mine.'

"In due time, the Samaritan received a letter from the London lottery-office, stating that No. 5,492 had come up a prize of £5,000. This happened to be his own ticket, La Tour's being a blank; but, instead of rejoicing, his first exclamation was (as his accomplice, a young fellow of the name of Waltham, since informed me):

"'Hang it, how provoking!' but reflecting a moment, he again exclaimed:

"'I have it! Waltham, just get one of the clerks to copy this letter *verbatim*, only saying that it is No. 20,302 that has come up the £5,000 prize, and

that 5,492 is a blank. Direct it to me, and then enclose it to your mother, and beg of her to post it instanter, that I may get it back without a moment's delay.'

"No sooner said than done. In due time, the false statement returned, bearing every *ex-officio* mark of the different posts it had passed through; and the Samaritan was as enchanted at his fraud as the more rigidly virtuous could be at their own nice sense of propriety, when they would not resort to such means, or indeed to any means at all, to save a fellow-creature from perishing. No sooner was he possessed of this precious document (having also got his own draft for the £5,000 cashed at a local bank, which he had received through his agent by the same post as the sham letter), than he sits down, and writes out the following :

" ' Mademoiselle Eugénie La Tour, debtor to —— £20. He is sorry to be so importunate, but as he has a large account to make up, will feel much obliged to her to remit him this amount by bearer.'

"The bearer being the before-mentioned accomplice, Waltham, who was posted off to poor La Tour's with a despatch-box full of bank-notes and gold, to the amount of £5,000.

"Now, can you guess who this Good Samaritan was?"

"Oh, Uncle Paulett, to be sure—who else could it

be?" cried Grace and I, throwing our arms round his neck; while Mary O'Donnell and Bloom Belzoni wiped their eyes, and kissed his hands.

"Nonsense," said my uncle, disengaging himself from us; "you musn't believe half that Duc de Bouillon tells you. It needs only to be his friend for him to endow you with all the talents yet discovered, and job you every cardinal virtue by the hour."

"Soit, mon cher; mais on ne prête qu'aux riches," said the Duke sinking back into his reclining position.

"Well, and about Goldsmith?" said Mary O'Donnell, who being fifteen, and a great lover of the "Vicar of Wakefield," to say nothing of her knowing "The Traveller" nearly by heart, was the most interested of the party.

"My child, I have little more to tell of him, for that was my first and last time of meeting him; and, poor fellow, he died the April following the Christmas I had met him at Bolton; however, on that Christmas night, he was the gayest of the gay, and when we parted, he gave me an invitation to go and see him in the Temple; but my mother taking me over to Ireland with her, on our return from the Bunburys, and remaining there till May, I was too late to avail myself of so great a privilege. On my return, I found the whole of his works, handsomely bound, in which he had written, according to his promise; and that is all that remains to me of poor Goldsmith."

"All!" echoed the Duke, "and how much more would you have had?"

"The man, if it might have been," said my uncle with a sigh; and he got up and stirred the fire in a manner that evinced more perseverance than skill.

"But surely Goldsmith couldn't have been ugly?" asked Mary O'Donnell.

"I fear, my dear Mary, according to the strict rules of beauty, that he was; but to my taste, no face so saturated with goodness could be ugly; however, his only positive beauty, which was his head, as I before told you, he concealed under that flagitious wig of his: his face was rather heavy, the nose thick and inclining to bottle, the upper lip long but somewhat redeemed by not being straight, but slightly curled and projecting over the under one: the brow was also rather projecting, the eyes hazel, and possessing that intense look of mingled kindness, honesty, and sagacity, which is to be seen in those of an old hound, such eyes in short as seem to let you just perceive a world of internal beauty, like those rude old Venetian caskets for keeping pearls unblemished; and which, when only opened the least in the world, betrayed the priceless gems concealed within their rugged exterior. I am sorry also, Miss O'Donnell and Miss Belzoni, to inform you that he was rather inclined to corpulency, and not over tall."

"And is Mary Horneck dead, too?" asked Bloom.

"No, she is married to General Gwyn; and, strange as it may seem, still beautiful."

"What a shame of her to have married at all," said Mary O'Donnell, indignantly.

"Well, I'm rather of your opinion, Mary," laughed my uncle.

"And what sort of beauty is she?" re-interrogated Mary.

"I suppose you mean, *was* she in Goldsmith's time?"

"Yes, that is what I mean."

"She was about the middle height, slight without being thin, which would imply angles—that great heresy in woman; but merely willowy and elastic, eyes that were not so much dark in themselves as from the constant dilation of their pupils; she had, too, one of those exquisitely soft and over-hanging complexions, like night and morning parting in a summer sky, the melancholy of the one tempering the glowing brightness of the other; but above all, and better than all, she possessed that undefinable grace, whether in action or in repose, which is to beauty what expression is to music—the secret of its power, the spell of its witchery. All her details were good, hands, feet, teeth, and mouth, from whence issued a most sweet and silvery voice, without which a woman is scarcely a woman."

Here, tea was brought in, and when Morden handed it to my uncle, he said something in a low voice to him which I did not hear, being too much pre-occupied in selecting the largest piece of plum-cake from the tempting pile arranged like planks in a timber-yard, which Mr. James was obligingly offering to my accept-

ance ; but having taken two pieces, not to destroy the symmetrical order of the heap, I heard my uncle say, as he rose and placed his cup upon the table :—

“ Oh ! is she ? I’ll go to her ;” and so saying, he left the room.

CHAPTER XI.

IF I had one talent more strongly developed than another at that time it certainly was for the demolition of plum-cake ; and could I have concentrated and confined my thoughts, tastes, and feelings to that innocuous and truly feminine occupation, I might have grown up with that quantum of inanity, so peculiar to "*British females*," and which gives them that blind faith in the superiority of the male sex, which has made man-worship, founded on Mammon-worship, the national code of England. Hence that charming little flattery of the faults, and truckling to the vices of men, which English young ladies, and English young ladies only, are capable of ; for in no other country will you hear young ladies expressing their fondness for the odour of cigars, and their love for racing, yachting, or boating, as the case may be, in order to assure one of

the opposite sex of their entire congeniality with his tastes ; in no other country will you see a set of women observing a profound and sulky silence towards each other when congregated after dinner, till the gentlemen appear, when lo ! like electric telegraphs, they are instantly animated into the most wonderful and rapid communicativeness, reversing the order of nature, and assiduously evincing that *prévenance* and deferential attention to the lords of the creation, which in every other quarter of the globe they receive, instead of give.

This courting and adulation of men that go on in English society (for it is nothing less), are positively disgusting. “ Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even do ye also unto them,” seems to be the one text upon which the “ *British female* ” squares the rule of her conduct ; so that in all this love-making on their part, they merely act upon the Christian principle of doing as they would be done by. It is only a pity that they confine so beautiful a code entirely to their intercourse with the other sex, for the light that so shines before men is put under a bushel, wherever women are concerned ; for your true and genuine “ *British female* ” has seldom a human feeling for her sister woman, unless it be one of hatred, malice, or revenge ; and how should it be otherwise, in a country where women have but one aim and end in life, namely, to covertly fool the superior sex before and after marriage ; for cunning and deceit form the

two-edged sword with which nature arms slaves, and how can the finer and purer tissues of character be expected from a race of women who are nationally denominated "*females!*" and who not only submit to, but echo, and certainly merit, the appellation?*

Fine and noble specimens of human nature might be expected, and are often, very often, found among *le beau sexe*; but what could be anticipated from a set of "*females!*" but that which their name implies. We are so justly ridiculed all over the continent for this zoological definition of our women, that I once heard an Austrian, on being asked if it had been a full ball at Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans on the previous night, reply :

"*Mais oui, surtout il y avait beaucoup d'Anglais et leurs femelles!*"

I don't know why I should make these reflections here, unless it is from an association of ideas in the electric chain of circumstances, for even then the first step of my educational ladder was on life's threshold in the shape of the worthy woman whose great golden rule for young ladies was,

"*Mesdemoiselles, il faut toujours mettre, et tenir les hommes à leur place; car le meilleur n'en vaut guère.*" And it is certainly better to learn this great truth in time, than to find it out too late.

My uncle had no sooner left the room than I began

* See "Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française." Article FEMELLE.

making the tour of it ; and having, thanks to the exceeding rigidity of my Salisbury flannel barricade, nearly swept a most beautiful and costly *capo de monte* cup and saucer off a *chiffonière*, which luckily Mr. Waltham caught and saved from falling, I thought it better to bend my steps to the safer side of the room where there was no china to be demolished ; so that I finally found myself standing by the cabinet, out of which my uncle had taken “ Goody Two Shoes ;” and as the little drawer was half open, I espied a large medallion of purple enamel, with initials in small brilliants on the back of it.

It is not only children that require to be taught that important branch of minor morals, the not prying into or fiddling with other persons’ things, for among the many shades or genuses of vulgarity and ill-breeding, so rife among our compatriots, is that one affecting all ages and classes, of never entering a room but every-thing is poked or pulled about till it is either broken or spoilt ; some persons while they are talking to you, if within reach of a table of knic-knares, indefatigably keep drumming the devil’s tattoo upon highly polished bühl, or tortoise-shell boxes, which has the double effect of both dimming and scratching them ; or if it happens to be a watch, or a *cassolette*, or any other chained trinket, then will it be swung backwards and forwards till it is broken. I once had a beautiful old *sèvre* china coffer, mounted in gold, fairly broken off its hinges, by being incessantly opened and shut during

half an hour's rapid talk by one of these O. T.'s only a fiddler ; or rather, O. B.'s only a bore.

On other occasions, I have come into the room, and found young ladies reading my notes ; not being able to deny the fact, they have apologized by saying they were only notes of invitation, whereupon I have invariably suggested, that as they were not invitations to them, it was really a pity they should give themselves the trouble of reading them. How often too, are servants blamed for dilapidated China, and *bijouterie*, that visitors have fiddled with till they have broken, and then, but not till then, left ? All this is mean, vulgar, and detestable, and the sooner people leave off such practices the better. Being at this time myself only a fiddler, I opened the drawer, and took out the medallion which, on the other side, was circled with a rich plait of sunny brown hair, thereby I knew it was a portrait : and at the cost of two nails, I opened it.

“ Oh ! what a beautiful lady !” exclaimed I, upon seeing the miniature of a girl about eighteen in a white dress, a broad blue Persian sash ; the hair powdered, and a piece of black velvet round the throat ; the eyes were dark blue ; the complexion delicately fair, and the features small and exceedingly fine, with that sort of poetical melancholy in the face, which casts over the countenance the tenderness of twilight.

“ Ah !” said the Duc de Bouillon with a sigh, actually making an effort to get from the sofa on which he was sitting, and come over to the cabinet at which I was

standing, in order to rescue the picture from my sacrilegious fiddlings. For having devoted a long life to a course of falling in love, the poor Duke was a great respecter of the sacred rites and high mysteries of the divine passion in others. “Ah! my dear child, put that down; put it back into the drawer, for fear your uncle should return; you must never touch that picture.” And he took it out of my hand, and replaced it.

“But whose picture is it?” asked I.

“It is the picture of poor Mary Capel, now Mrs. Vavasour. She was your Uncle Paulett’s first, and indeed I believe his only love; but her mother forced her to marry the greatest wretch that ever existed, a Mr. Vavasour, the father of that boy that Sir Joseph Paulett said was coming here with his wife.”

“A first love; what is a first love?” said I.

“A dream, Mirry,” replied the poor Duke with a dyspeptic sigh, and a ludicrous look of fat sentiment at a picture of his own first love, the Duchesse de Mazarin, contained in the lid of a snuff-box, which he always carried about him when my Aunt Marley dined out.

“A dream!” I repeated; “I wonder then, if I have ever dreamt a first love?”

“Scarcely yet, my little darling, I should think,” said the Duke kissing me, as both he and Mr. Waltham laughed immoderately.

“Ah, Monseigneur,” said the Secretary with a sly

glance at the snuff-box, “on revient toujours à ses premières amours ? n'est-ce pas ?”

“Ma foi, mon cher Monsieur, c'est un peu obligatoire ; vu, que nos premières amours ne nous reviennent jamais !” laughed the Duke, taking a pinch of snuff, and consigning the Duchesse de Mazarin to his pocket.

He had scarcely done so, before the folding-doors opened wide to admit my uncle, who, however, brought back more than he had taken away ; for a lady was leaning on his arm. But I must describe her, for there are no such ladies to be seen now, I promise you, nor were there even in the War, unless you went to Paris for them, which was not easily done then ; her appearance struck us as the more extraordinary, not to say ridiculous, from the fact of English absurdity of dress, being at that time the very antipodes of French absurdity. The English “*females*” (dear fatal name rest *never* “unrevealed !”) then really did dress with poke bonnets, like bathing machines, with green veil, union-jacks floating above them, very long waists, very short and very narrow petticoats, tea-coloured jean-boots, with rather thick soles ; the said boots being laced up the centre ; a broad hem, unhidden by flounce, or fur-bellow, was all the ornament ever tacked to their skirts, a long tight plain spencer completed in those days the Anglo-Saxon female costume, exactly like that of the young ladies who go (I believe with the Prince of Wales) down to a public-house at Wapping to besiege that remorseless *crève-cœur* of an actor, as

described in that extraordinary histrionic and historical nightmare of M. Frédéric le Maistre's, entitled, "Kean, Drame en cinq actes," except that the spencers aforesaid were not made of green baize, as represented on the boards of the Porte St. Martin.

It will be perceived by this that the English style of dress in 1812 was the flat and horizontal, whereas the French style, on the contrary, was the perpendicular and the *bombé*, of which the lady now leaning on my uncle's arm was a florid and first-rate specimen; for though an *émigrée* she had friends who kept her *au courant* to the Parisian fashions. She, therefore, on the present occasion burst upon our dazzled vision in all the facets of the following splendour: instead of a bathing-machine, she wore on her head a chimney-pot of white Leghorn; for, without any exaggeration, the crown of her bonnet was half a yard high, and quite perpendicular, only slightly bowed out at the back, and curving forwards in front. This chimney-pot also did duty as a flower-pot, as at the very summit of it appeared a profusion of such exquisite roses, carnations, mignonette, and pansies, as at that time were never seen in the British isles, except growing in real *parterres*; the leaf, that is, the front of this stupendous superstructure was shallow, being about the depth and shape of half a milk-pan. On each side underneath appeared little tufts of very short black ringlets, all kept in their place by a band of narrow black velvet round the head; the forehead under this black velvet was

high and straight, evidencing much capacity, but *bombé* in the centre, with three wrinkles or lines as straight as if they had been ruled ; the eyebrows were well marked, the eyes small, long, coffee-coloured, and *spirituel*. The nose was somewhat long, somewhat thin, and, if the truth must be told, somewhat red ; but as those most concerned, namely, its own eyes, overlooked all these little defects, they are no business of ours. The complexion of this lady (though she herself was a staunch royalist) set forth the republican hues, not handsome when united in the human face, of the national colours of Geneva, red and yellow.

The mouth, like that of most Frenchwomen, was a decided failure, and need not have opened so wide to display such very irregular teeth ; but with all this, there was such a decided expression of good-nature and intellectual vivacity about the face, that it would have redeemed far plainer features. In stature about the middle height. She was thin and angular ; but, instead of going the lengths the English ladies did, her waist if waist that could be called, which waist was none, went literally under her arms, the back at each side, gracefully branching off like the sticks of a fan. She wore a black velvet spencer, with a fall of black blonde round the waist, and slashed, or what were then called top-sleeves.

Her dress was composed of white cambric muslin, but flounced up to the knees, each flounce being deeply embroidered in a wheel-pattern (her own work), and an insertion of the same embroidery heading each *volant*. In

her right hand she carried a black velvet reticule with a steel clasp and chain, and across the same arm hung a yellow, or rather a deep aventurine-coloured Cashmere shawl, with a palm-border to it ; but altogether the most miraculous part of her appearance to our uninitiated War-like eyes, was the exquisite make and fit of her gloves and shoes.

“ Grace—Mirry,” said my uncle, leading her up to us. “ Here is Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, the lady who is kindly going to take charge of you ; and in return for her care I hope, nay indeed, I’m sure, you will do everything to please her, and give her as little trouble as possible.”

We both felt inclined at the commencement of this exordium to blush and hang our heads, and indeed by the species of vertigo that was stealing over mine, it was evident that the tide of my *idées Napoléoniennes* was fast flowing in upon me, but it was impossible to resist the affectionate and polished *accueil* of Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, who, like all classes of her compatriots, possessed in the highest degree Swift’s most just definition of good-breeding—“ The art of putting people at their ease ;” so that in less than five minutes, like the Lilliputians with Gulliver, we took courage to examine her from head to foot, and even to manipulate her bag in a manner which she took an early opportunity of informing us was “ très-inconvenable pour des demoiselles.”

The Duc de Bouillon, much to his inconvenience,

had remained standing all this time, as if he had forgotten that Mademoiselle de Guilleragues *was only a governess!* though I rather think that it was because he did not forget it, that he made a point of standing, as he never forgot he was a gentleman, though a prince of the blood.

“Permettez, Monseigneur, que je vous présente Mademoiselle de Guilleragues?” said my uncle.

“Mon bon ami, Sir George, me ménage toujours des surprises agréables : charmé d’avoir l’honneur de faire votre connaissance, Mademoiselle,” bowed the Duke.

“Comment!” exclaimed Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, clasping her hands, while the tears came into her eyes.

“J’aurai l’honneur de parler à Monseigneur le Duc de Bouillon, l’illustre cousin de sa Majesté? Ah! quel bonheur!”

And the good lady was obliged to rescue her bag from my clutches, in order to obtain the assistance of her handkerchief, as the tears were coursing each other down her cheeks.

“Ma chère demoiselle,” said the Duke, holding out both hands to her, “if by accident you happen to be related to my old friend, the Maréchal de Guilleragues, you and I ought to be very good friends, for he and I were such.”

“I am his niece, Monseigneur, and am only too much honoured by your allowing me to establish my right of succession to my uncle’s high privileges. But

as now," said she, with a smile, "I am only a poor governess," and here she turned to my uncle, "I always say, upon entering a new situation, what my ancestor Monsieur de Guilleragues said to Louis Quatorze; as I generally hear the same complaints of my predecessors as those his Majesty made to my relative of his."

"And what were they?" asked my uncle.

"Why," replied Mademoiselle, "when Louis Quatorze appointed my ancestor ambassador to the Porte, he told him that if he meant to acquit himself properly of his embassy, he must be the very reverse of his predecessors. To which Monsieur de Guilleragues replied: 'Sire, I will endeavour to act in such a manner, that your Majesty shall not be obliged to give similar instructions to my successor.'"

"Ha! ha! ha! very good. On voit bien Mademoiselle, que vous chassez bien de race."

Mademoiselle gracefully acknowledged the compliment, and my uncle rang, and ordered supper to be got ready for her.

"A propos de La Porte," said the Duke, "mon Général, you should show Mademoiselle your magnificent sable-lined pelisses, and diamond snuff-boxes, especially the blood-stone one, with a view of the seraglio in brilliants at the back of it."

"As to the pelisses," said my uncle, "I am ashamed to say that they have been left hanging up in the servants' hall, till the moth has got into one of the

sleeves ; and I took it to London last year to be repaired ; but they said the sable was so magnificent, and the sleeve being almost two yards wide, it would have cost about £150 to match the fur ; so I would not have it done."

"It would have been better to have disposed of both the pelisses, for at that rate you would have got about £1,500 for the two, or more," said the Duke.

"It would so," replied my uncle, "if I had thought of it."

"Ah, there it is ; you never think of anything but giving," said the Duke ; "so now give Mademoiselle the pleasure of looking at the boxes."

"Ah, Monsieur a été à la Porte aussi ?" said Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, as my uncle walked over to a cabinet to get the boxes.

"Oui, Mademoiselle, j'étais si mauvais diplomate, qu'on m'a mis à la Porte !" laughed my uncle.

The boxes were now produced, and the amulets they contained perfumed the whole room with their subtle and delicious odours. On the lid of one with the view of the Seraglio at Constantinople, in brilliants, was a curious and magnificent piece of barbaric workmanship.

"Ciel ! comme c'est beau !" exclaimed Mademoiselle ; and then, not able to resist a *bon mot*, she added : "Tiens ! je ne savais pas que l'on brillait tant au séraïl !"

Supper was soon after announced, and we were

allowed to remain up, in order that we might escort Mademoiselle de Guilleragues to her future dominions. She had completely disarmed us, or rather me, for Grace had no prejudices to conquer. But Nelly, poor Nelly ! dethroned monarchs, disgraced ministers, and impeached commanders-in-chief, by a process of comparative analogy, *might* perhaps have some faint glimmering of the moral civil war that devastated her constitution upon that eventful night, but humbler mortals, I'm very sure, could not ; therefore, it would be vain to attempt to describe it. One outward evidence, and one only, of these internal commotions remains vividly impressed upon my memory, and if adequately transferred to canvas, it would have made a worthy *pendant* for an historical picture of Cromwell ordering "that bauble," the mace, to be removed from the table of the House of Commons, it was when Nelly, pointing to the shelf that contained my library ! namely, a New Testament, Common Prayer-Book, Hymn-Book, spelling-book, and highly dogs'-eared editions of "Puss in Boots" and "Mother Hubbard," without uttering another syllable, before, or after, said :

"Take thim booksh, Missh Mirry, to your new Frinch tacher, Missh Killrag ; itsh no longer any businesh of *mine*!"

CHAPTER XII.

MADEMOISELLE DE GUILLERAGUES had now been with us about eight months, and much had she had to contend with; for being inducted into a new school-room must, I should think, be exceedingly like taking possession of a new kingdom; whether in the natural course of succession, or by main force (commonly called usurpation), or by the all-powerful, but short-lived omnipotence of popular caprice; still there are always so many contrary interests to conciliate, so much open enmity to vanquish, so much covert rancour to guess at and avoid, and so much neutral apathy to be propitiated into good-will, that in either case it becomes the most difficult thing in the world to satisfy the *exigeance* of that polyhedral Mrs. Grundy, Public Opinion.

All this is merely a round-about or Irish way of

condensing my private opinion, that both governesses and monarchs have “a very hard place of it;” and indeed, were it not that the latter are so much better paid than the former, I’d as soon be the one as the other.

Mademoiselle de Guilleragues found much to do, and still more to undo. Between Nelly’s tone and my aunts’ tempers, our deportment was not exactly up to the refined standard of a person who had a tender and admiring recollection of the graceful bearing of Marie-Antoinette ; but, as she with truth confessed, that the best and most important part of our tuition was the portion we had received from Nelly, the latter soon grew not only reconciled to her, but complimentary in her turn ; for although, among other innovations, she had the additional trouble of curling my hair as well as Grace’s, yet only one little month after the inauguration of the new dynasty, while screwing up one of the aforesaid curls so tightly, that I was obliged to clamour for repeal, as loudly as ever she herself had done, before I could shut my eyes, she volunteered to observe (and it was the more handsome on her part, as there was nothing to call forth the remark at the time) :

“ Indade, I don’t doubt but dat Mamzelle Killrag ish a good sort of ooman enough, considering she’s only a Frinch ooman.”

Even the higher powers at the onset had voluntarily abdicated in her favour : for my aunts, like all weak

and violent persons, were full of *engouements*. They were great people for idols and angels at first, but unfortunately, all their angels, like Lucifer, ended by being devils. Well would it have been for us, if the absolute power delegated to Mademoiselle de Guilleragues on her arrival, had been continued to her intact, for as Lamartine says : "The epoch when aristocracies fall, nations regenerate, the sap of the people is there," and upon my aunts' rule having fallen into disuse, we really were beginning to regenerate, poor little people that we were. But, alas ! terrible was the re-action ; a month saw us again under a despotic government, our studies were constantly interrupted by a knock at the door, and the *poursuivant* Mole opening it with "If you please, Mumzelle, Mrs. Marley says as the young ladies is to be got ready to go out in the carriage with her directly."

The chief cause of these interruptions were Lady Laura O'Shindy's Saturday Morning parties, or as my Uncle Charles not inaptly called them (from the extraordinary collection of curious, and thank Heaven, rare bipeds, there congregated), her *matinées maroufles*.* Why we were dragged there, goodness only knows ; unless it was that benevolence, philanthropy, liberty, progression, and the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers, being always *talked* at them. It was as a sort of sample or pattern off of the entire piece of her

* Maroufle, in French, means a dirty boorish fellow, also a cheat.

benevolence, that my Aunt Marley exhibited us at these art unions of mock-sentiment, mock-virtue, and mock-philosophy, though the ostensible reason assigned by her was, "to enlighten our minds."

All I know is, to our infinite horror and dismay, *there* we were taken without Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, for that would look like a restraint upon us ; " and why should any human being be restrained ?" as my Aunt Marley used to ask, amid rounds of applause at the O'Shindy gatherings, a question, however, which remained unanswered, though applauded ; for, for us, in our untutored ignorance, was reserved the triumph of bringing her round to a contrary opinion, as at home she seemed to think that there were at least two human beings who should be *always* restrained, nay more, coerced. Meanwhile, week after week were our necessary studies interrupted for the unnecessary martyrdom of attending Lady Laura's botheropedias, as Nelly called them ; while we exclaimed with Mrs. Haller : " Is Saturday come again so soon ?"

We were too young to draw up a debtor and creditor account of *pros* and *cons*, and to set Sir Joseph Paulett's departure for Spain against the O'Shindy *matinées maroufles*. Nor indeed, even had we possessed the calculating talents of Mr. Joseph Hume, or the calculating machine of Mr. Babbage, could we have found much on our balance side of the sheet ; for though Don José was gone, he had left us

the small change of himself, in his wife, six sons, and a daughter; so that my poor Uncle Paulett bid fair to be nephewed and nieced out of house and home; for with regard to my aunts and Lady Paulett, it so fell out—that is, *they* so fell out—that from the first it was easy to perceive that the united feuds of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, Montagues and Capulets, had been distilled into a sort of concentrated quintessence for their sole use; Lady Paulett was too much a woman of the world to meet my aunts half-way in their generous attempts at open warfare, setting aside the vulgarity of what are called quarrels.

The party most injured and most in the right is sure to get the worst of it in public opinion, from the fact of their sense of injury not allowing them to dulcify their detestation, and rein in their resentment down to the modulated tone, and *manège* amble exacted by the delicate nerves of society; whereas, the quiet back-stabbings in the dark of the aggressor despatch the victim much more effectually, without any public breach of the peace, or the slightest compromise of the assassin. Had Lady Paulett been hump-backed (which she was not), my aunts, disliking her as they did, would have said before a room full of people, “Don’t you think, Lady Paulett, you had better put on a shawl? some figures look best covered;” and by so doing, would have got themselves, not undeservedly, branded with ill-nature; whereas, had the hump been on either of my aunts’ shoulders, and

therefore concealed as far as might be with a scarf or shawl, Lady Paulett, with precisely the same motive, would have snatched off the friendly drapery with a sweet smile, and said, in a soft voice :

“ Dear Mrs. Marley,” (or Miss Paulett), “ you seem overpowered with the heat; allow me to help you off with your shawl ? ” Whereupon that ever righteous, and unerring judge, the world, would have decided that Lady Paulett was a sweet woman, and resented, as much as its sublime apathy ever does resent other people’s injuries, the bare idea of her having a malicious motive for so kind an act. (Moral, in evil or good, it matters little *what* people do, but *the way* in which they do it.) “ Two of a trade,” says the proverb, “ can never agree ; ” and both my aunts and Lady Paulett being exceedingly jealous of their influence over their uncle, or, in other words, tenacious of their rule in the house, it was not likely that they should bestow a single grain more of affection upon each other than they did. The hostile powers thus drawn out in battle array, their respective resources may be esteemed as follows : My aunts had youth and beauty, and what in the War was considered great taste in dress ; the fact being that, from their beauty, the most extraordinary freaks of colour and material, played pranks with impunity on them, which would have got them transported for life had they done so upon less favoured mortals.

Lady Paulett had a knowledge of the world, and

fashion : for it is a remarkable fact, that could she and Fiametta have been insured an eternal existence, neither Debrett, nor his successor, Mr. Burke, need ever have given to the public the valuable results of their labours, so complete a peerage and baronetage did they form ; for even as a child, I don't think Fiametta's mouth ever opened to anything less than a Lady Mary, or a Lord George. My aunts said it was very vulgar to be always talking peerage, as the Pauletts did ; but what else could they do, poor people, if they talked at all ? for as the whole and sole study of their lives was to know great people, and as persons seldom devote *all* their energies to the achievement of one object without succeeding in it, they *did* know great people, nay, all the great people in London ; therefore I maintain that it showed great sense in them to only talk of what they knew, and I sincerely wish that every one would adopt the same plan, and then there would be much less ill-nature retailed in the world, and still less believed ; whereas that said dear world now treats every *on dit* that can possibly injure their neighbours, as Puff in the "Critic" treats farcical incidents, and considers all calumnies as "things just so probable, that though they never *did* happen, they *might* do so."

But my aunts should have been more tolerant to this little foible of Lady Paulett's, from recollecting the more favourable circumstances in which they had had the good fortune to be placed ; for having lived the most part of their lives in, or near Clanfuddle, where pota-

toes and peat were more plentiful than peers or potentates, they were not of course likely to fall into a *cacoëthes libro rosso*.

My aunts, when pleased, were good-natured ; Lady Paulett, whether she was pleased or not, was always good-tempered, and generally good-humoured. But greater perhaps than all other sources of rivalry were the respective talents and personal appearance of Fiametta and ourselves. She was one of the prettiest children that ever was seen, with all the advantages of dress, and still more of that *savoir vivre*, which even the children of worldly persons, living in, and for, the world, so soon acquire ; for though only ten, she had as much manner (without being *maniérée*, for she was too off-hand for that) as if she had been twenty.

This was pronounced disgusting by my aunts, especially as this infant Circe used to go even still greater lengths, and dance to assembled drawing-rooms of an evening cachouchas and boleros *en costume*, which, as my aunts truly said, would have been better adapted to the boards of the Opera ; a remark which my Uncle Paulett always silenced with a frown, as he saw nothing beyond the beauty of the child, and the exquisite grace of her movements, with which he was perfectly enchanted ; the more so perhaps that, echoing all the slang of her brothers, she also set up for a wit. The fact is, the whole thing was *beyond* my aunts ; their ideas of children being little chubby, red and white receptacles for bread and milk and roast mutton, like

Grace and me, swathed in the smallest possible quantity of unadorned cambric muslin, or exiled nankin, with no more manners than a young calf, or no greater stock of accomplishments than those possessed by youthful ourang-outangs.

Then, too, there was another anomaly, a sort of excrescence upon these Paulett exotics, in the shape of Master Philip Vavasour, a young gentleman of seventeen, who though *blasé boys* were not then invented, yet upon the strength (as it was supposed) of a particularly well-turned head of soft, brown, crisp, curled hair, rising above a remarkably white round throat, a very fine pair of dark, long cut, softly brilliant eyes, a most delicately chiselled nose, short upper lip, brilliant teeth, harmoniously moulded chin, high white forehead, and Antinous profile, used to affect the Byronic in dress and bearing. The former he achieved by wooing sore throats in going without a neckerchief, and the latter by fancying himself desperately in love with Fiametta Paulett ; and, as he was the heir of his uncle, Mr. Dingly Vavasour, the *millionnaire*, Lady Paulett had already given Fiametta instructions (not indeed that she needed them, such was the precocity of her genius) never to thwart *dear* Philip ; for though it was true that he was only a commoner, still such a splendid property as Marmiondale was not to be let slip through one's fingers, unless indeed a ducal coronet jerked it through.

It may then easily be supposed, with such “unprece-

dented attraction," as the play bills have it, what a sorry figure *we!* and our Salisbury flannel housings cut; in vain poor Mademoiselle de Guilleragues styled Fiametta an *effrontée petite comédienne*, and even on one occasion went so far, in speaking of Don José, as to call him *son saltimbanque de père*; in vain she continued to prognosticate certain future ignitions of the Thames from Grace's great application and capacity, and the rapid progress she made, whether in useful knowledge or attractive accomplishments; in vain she proclaimed that I should one day be a genius, the only earthly guarantee this good, kind creature had for going security for me to so vast an amount, being that I was *then* a dunce: still we had no chance against such fearful odds, and we felt we had not. Yet did this disheartening on our part arise from neither envy nor jealousy. We wondered at, and admired Fia, as we called her, with too large and luminous an admiration for such a sharp goading passion as jealousy, or so dark and mean a one as envy, to take possession of us. No, it was nothing more than the same despairing feeling which seized upon the poor sculptor of Chios, and drove him home to break his moulds after he had seen the Zephyrus of Praxiteles.

What was the use of spelling, grammar, history, French, Italian, arithmetic, or geography? Let Grace master them as she would, or let them master me, as they might, we felt that in either case they could never

make us dance boleros like Fiametta. But this was an unattainable dream, a vision too bright, and too far beyond us to weigh long upon our youthful, and for that reason, philosophical temperaments ; therefore the real arrow that rankled, was the undisguised contempt of Philip Vavasour, for all we said and did. Had he been an ordinary boy, like Clarence, Gloucester, Cumberland, Howard, Russell, and Stanley Paulett, Fiametta's brothers—riding forbidden horses ; mortgaging a fortnight's allowance for one day's tarts ; hugging Mrs. Stillingfleet with one arm, while he stretched out the other to steal her brandied cherries ; or winking at his confederates while he was *doing* the elders ; or even had he attempted a poll-tax by announcing that “ his name was Norval !” and extorted half-crowns on the strength of it from old gentlemen's drab-pockets, like the Master Abrahams ; or made classical attempts to excavate ancient Rome, with the *As in Presenti* like the Master O'Donnells—we should have known how to have repaid his contempt in kind. But how was it possible to despise a young gentleman who never played at marbles, had always clean hands and perfumes on his handkerchiefs, and not only dined with the grown-up people, but called with as much authority as any of them for whatever he might chance to want during the repast.

In short about this time we began to be thoroughly miserable, for though of course my aunts would not openly acknowledge our inferiority to Fiametta, they

secretly felt it, and with their usual justice, vented the imperfections of their own training upon us. They had, moreover, other sources of discontent at this epoch : Lady Paulett, in order to divide and govern, had entirely appropriated one of the aides-de-camp to her own service ; and I suppose I need not say that one was Lord Frederick, while between my Aunt Bell and Captain Dapperwit, there existed a little difference of opinion ; *she* thought he ought to have proposed for her in form, but *he*, it seems thought otherwise, for though several times on the brink of doing so, when it came to the point, he was seized with a panic, which had it been in war, instead of love, would have been fatal to his reputation ; but as everything in those days was judged by a military standard, the prudent Captain no doubt thought that in a wife as well as in a sword, *temper* was the first desideratum. I think I mentioned that my grandmother had tempted Providence by committing marriage three times, and three times a merciful Providence had commuted her sentence to widowhood ; but this fatal matrimonial mania having become chronic, she took unto herself a fourth lord and master, under the seductive form of Mr. Phelim Fitz-ackerley, shortly after my poor mother's marriage. This gentleman had now also departed for the other world to join his predecessors, and the inconvenience which his doing so occasioned my aunts, arose simply from his disconsolate widow, who was now too far advanced on the same journey herself to hope to replace him by a

fifth husband, wishing one or both of her daughters to return, at least for a short time, to Clanfuddle, to solace her bereavement ; but in weighing the matter, they had decided that two daughters, let them be *divided* as they would, could never replace four husbands ! so they resolved upon remaining where they were, especially as the old Margravine of Anspach, (*ci-devant* Lady Craven) had written to my Uncle Paulett to threaten him with a visit, and was now hourly expected ; neither was there any use in going into mourning for a fourth step-father : as my aunts justly observed, since their mother had married the man, why didn't he live on as he ought to have done, and take care of her ?

My Aunt Bell felt that being able to quarter *four* husbands in her maternal escutcheon, was not by any means the best bait for securing *one* on her own account ; and as my Aunt Marley read Buffon, and therefore knew that *les races se féminisent*, she feared that if she wore mourning for a quadrupled step-father, it would be proclaiming her poor mother's intense imbecility, and thereby causing her own "*unerring wisdom*" to be questioned. All things thus weighed, my aunts mourned the defunct Mr. Phelim Fitzackerly, *à la Chinoise*, in sky-blue, adopting however, on this trying occasion, what the French call *une humeur noire*, of which *we* had the full benefit.

In all these warring interests there was only my dear Uncle Paulett who remained unchanged, or not quite that either, for he was, if possible, kinder than ever ;

and as he was a very early riser, after family prayers, which he always read in the library, he used to have us into his study of a morning long before Fiametta and the rest of the magnates were up ; and on these occasions the programme generally consisted of chocolate and rusks, and Fido, a darling little Blenheim, who danced all round the room in measured time on his hind paws, while my uncle drew from a flute such unpretending airs as "Malbrook s'en va t'en guerre," "Ah ! vous dirai-je Maman," or "Au clair de la lune, mon ami Pierrot," and Pomba looked on grave as a judge, and apparently despising Fido in her heart as Miriam did King David when he executed similar gambols before the Ark ; but the cream of the jest always consisted in my uncle's saying, when the exhibition was over and the canine *coryphée* had received biscuits in lieu of bouquets, presented by him to her with a low bow :

"Thank you, Miss Fiametta Paulett, dancing is certainly a most charming accomplishment ; but you see I hold it dog cheap."

Now this was another phase of this dear, good man's amiable, but often fatal weakness of character ; he assumed that we must feel a little (were it ever so little) jealous of the plaudits heaped upon Fiametta's boleros, and therefore made us this little deprecating ovation at her expense, instead of (had it been the case) wisely and honestly blaming us for so bad a feeling. But no wonder his only fault was rapidly increasing, for domestic fear is a moral hot-bed for forcing into

luxuriance every defect of character. And since the arrival of Lady Paulett the house was so torn with intestine commotions, that often on the day of a large dinner my aunts would be slamming their respective bed-room doors upon each other, so that had not Lady Paulett been there, there would have been no lady to receive the guests, though her doing so, was sure to entail a diatribe from my aunts against her impertinence in usurping their place ; and often when she was charitably bestowing upon their health the indisposition, which only existed in their tempers, as the sole excuse she could make for their rudeness in not receiving the people whom they had convened, to her unutterable dismay they would suddenly appear in the midst of their condoling friends, and with a pyrotechnic look at Lady Paulett, assure the former, that they never had been so well in all their lives.

“ And it was very odd that Lady Paulett should try to kill them, as, being neither bishops nor cabinet ministers, no one would benefit by their demise, ha, ha, ha ! ” And on these, aias ! by no means unfrequent occasions, my poor uncle, with a faint heart, would try to echo their ha, ha, as if the whole affair had been a rare jest, though, Heaven knows, it was no joke to him ; and then would the entire household devoutly wish that so good, amiable, and noble-minded a man had been wived, instead of nieced, though, upon reflection, I am convinced that he, individually, would have benefitted little by the change ; for as Sir Thomas

Moore's historians relate of him, that "when he fell a marrying," although in love, with the youngest Miss Colt, who was the pretty and the good-tempered one, yet suddenly recollecting that the eldest was so very ugly, and so very ill-tempered, "he bethought him that if he did not take compassion on her and marry her, no one else would," so he victimized himself forthwith; and as my poor uncle would have been quite capable of a similar piece of self-immolation, the odds are, we should only have had a shrew aunt the more, and an ugly shrew into the bargain; and unless in extreme cases marriage is a dangerous experiment, for it has been truly said, that "it either gets rid of one's devils by the presence of an angel, or else it supplies their place with one whose name is legion."

With the exception of these little revels in the study of a morning, we were driven to our own resources for amusement, as Belzoni would not, for some unrevealed reason, allow Bloom to come and stay with us while Fiametta and Philip Vavasour were there; and the O'Donnells and Abrahams being, like ourselves, evidently overawed by so much grandeur, came rarely, to what they had done in the beginning.

Now I'm sorry to have to confess it, and I hope the virtuous reader won't fling down the book in disgust, but I was born a mimic; and for my further misfortune was endowed—as most mimics are—with a terribly keen sense of the ridiculous, and once knowing a person's peculiarities, I could not only imitate their face, voice and gestures, but

could extemporize whole scenes of adventures for them, and furnish dialogues of what they *would* have said, had they been placed in such circumstances. But I beg that no one will run away with the common, but very erroneous idea, that ill-nature is the ground-work of all mimicry, for it is not, and it was often those whom I loved the most that I imitated the best, provided they had any salient points to imitate ; but parrots and ventriloquists might just as well be accused of being ill-natured and venomous, as mimics, for mimicry merely arises from a peculiar organization, moral and physical. Indeed, no one can sing or speak oratorically well, or be a good linguist, without possessing an imitative power, which is the germ of mimicry.

There could not well be a more good-natured man, or one, perhaps, who possessed and deserved more friends than the late Mr. Mathews the comedian, yet every one is aware that there could not possibly have been a more inimitable mimic ; neither were James Smith nor Theodore Hook ill-natured men, and they had also the power of giving zest to their stories by their mimicry ; but mind, I am by no means arguing that mimicry is a praiseworthy and desirable quality in any man, much less in any woman. I merely assert, and could prove, that it is not synonymous with bad heartedness and ill-nature as it is vulgarly supposed to be. Unfortunately for me, Grace, who was generally speaking, the rudder and ballast of my little crazy barque, so enjoyed, not to say revelled, in my imper-

sonations, that, instead of checking me, she encouraged and urged me on, by always asking me if I had got any new person, just as if I had been a sculptor, or a painter, and she was inquiring if I had any new work on the easel, or *statuette* in the clay.

The consequence was, that as we had a *carte blanche* from my uncle to invent work for the poor *émigrés*, a certain Madame Morel soon furnished me with the costumes for my characters as I wanted them, which were, of course, *fac-similes* of those worn by the originals, from whom I copied; but these “properties” were kept a profound secret by Grace and me.

Strange to say, my Uncle Paulett, though I knew him by heart, I never could take off; but as I told him, when I grew older, as he often urged me to try, that he was a person to be *copied*, and not *mimicked*. My present *répertoire* consisted of Nelly, Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, the Duc de Bouillon, the two aides-de-camp, a stuttering brigade-major, Lady Laura O’Shindy, and our poor, dear, old Italian master, the Abbate Assai, whom we doated on, from the plaguing he endured from us, and the sweetmeats he bestowed upon us, and whom, in our school-room wit, we used to nickname Troppo. Of all these, I had the *fac-similed* costumes, the men’s frock-coats obviating the necessity of those more masculine garments, which few women succeed in wearing, and which never become them if they do.

Well, “as it fell upon a day,” when I thought that

I had, as usual, bolted the school-room door, and was giving one of my ‘at homes’ to Grace, the bundle of pink calico containing the “property” dresses, including the aides-de-camp cocked hats, Mademoiselle de Guilleragues’ chimney-top bonnet, Nelly’s illustrious brown beaver, and the Duc de Bouillon’s well-wadded blue velvet coat and satin waistcoat in one, with the blue ribbon and star of the *Saint Esprit*, splendidly wrought in spangles, and a bay window of eider down, projecting from the front, was lying spread open on a table; while I, in a long, tight priest’s cassock, a full-bottomed wig, three-cornered hat, large iron-rimmed spectacles, a huge pinchbeck snuff-box, filled with snuff, which I was plentifully pretending to take, but really sprinkling upon the little white cambric bands, that fluttered from my collar; and also was in the act of transferring to Grace the *Stordita ragazza! che cattivézza!* and *Ah! qual maledetta fanciulla!* that the poor Abbate used so liberally to bestow upon me; Grace the while rolling on the sofa with laughter, holding her side, and declaring, with the tears in her eyes, that I did poor dear Troppo better than any of them.

I had just taken off my spectacles, joined the long ends together in a triangle, as the Abbate was wont to do, given three sonorous hemis, and was proceeding, after the storm, to the calm and explanatory part of the lesson, in my best Roman north-wind boom-along-a-corridor-accent, when the treacherous and unbolted

door opened wide, and in walked the Abbate himself and Mademoiselle de Guilleragues. The King of the Black Isles suddenly turned into black marble, in the "Arabian Nights," could not have stood more petrified, than did Grace and I.

"Ver pretty, 'pon my vord, young lady," said Mademoiselle, with a frown; "so dis is de vay you study your Italian lesson; fie, donc: I am shame of you."

The Abbate, who, however he might be provoked into scolding us himself, never could bear any one else to do so, said, with a good-natured laugh, as he patted on my unworthy head, the humble imitation of his own wig:

"Ah, ha, Signorina, you tink, I s'pose, the best vay for to mastère Italien, is to tak off your Italien mastère."

"Tiens!" suddenly exclaimed Mademoiselle Guilleragues, who had been investigating the mysteries of the pink calico bundle, and had just fished up her own miniature leghorn Golgotha, which she was now twirling round upon her hand; "Tiens! est-ce que par hasard mon chapeau aura fait des petits? Vat does all dis mean, Mademoiselle Sedley? I expec de trute from you of all dis enfantillage dat I see here?"

Grace, who would have at once told everything, had she herself been alone concerned, blushed and

hung her head ; whereupon Mademoiselle was going to march her away into solitary confinement.

“ Stop !” cried I, “ Mademoiselle ; Grace has nothing to do with it, it’s all my fault. I was I know taking off the Abbate when you came in.”

“ Yes, you cannot ver vell deny dat,” said Mademoiselle, “ ven ve come in and catch you.”

“ I don’t want to deny it,” said I, indignantly ; and thinking the best way of being impertinent was to make virtue my excuse, and tell the whole truth, I boldly added, assuming a bullying attitude that ill accorded with the pacific garb I then wore, “ and I take off every one in the house, too, and *you* better than any one.”

“ Ah, vraiment ! I shall be curious to see myself ; dey say it is difficult to know one’s self.”

“ If you won’t punish Grace,” rejoined I, anxious to capitulate on the best terms that I could, after this first tremendous explosion of valour, “ I’ll burn all these things, and never take off any one again.”

Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, who understood children thoroughly, knew that though they will sing, dance, or talk by the hour, for their own amusement, they often become actually paralyzed with that most painful of all complaints, *mauvaise honte*, when asked to do either the one or the other before grown-up persons or strangers, and would willingly escape up the chimney, were such a mode of flight possible,

rather than be compelled to the exhibition. Therefore, quietly seating herself, and pointing to the Abbate to do the same, she said in a calm, determined voice, from which I knew there was no appeal :

“ Mademoiselle, it is not for you to offer me conditions ; and the punishment I shall impose upon you is, that you now go through your whole series of imitations, not excepting the Abbate Assai and myself, that I may the better judge what your ideas of us are.”

This was indeed a terrible and unexpected blow, and so completely was I taken by surprise, that I burst out crying.

“ Recollect, Mademoiselle, dat Monsieur l’Abbé and I wait ; so perhaps ven you have done crying, you shall have de goodness to begin.”

But I only sobbed the more, till Grace whispered me : “ You had better, Mirry, for you know Mademoiselle will stay here all day till you do.”

Re-actions were generally rapid with me, so I suddenly resolved upon making Nelly my pasquin, and sticking any little compliments upon her which I might see fit to address to Mademoiselle de Guilleragues ; so, seizing the pink calico bundle, I retired behind an Indian screen, which was always my dressing room ; and though the Abbate suggested that as I was already dressed for the part, I should begin with him, I declined ; and two minutes after emerged from

behind the screen such a facsimile of Nelly, not only in manner, but in look and costume, that though both Mademoiselle and the Abbate tried hard not to laugh, by means of divers frowns and shakes of the head, yet it was all in vain, and they ended in a perfect roar, as my opening soliloquy and by-play were too much for them. The moment I heard this peal, I knew the game was in my own hands.

I entered with a listless saunter, as Nelly was wont to do after a long and fruitless hunt after my most impish self, and after announcing in a give-up-the-ghost voice, that “de back wash dropping out of me just,” accompanying this *bulletin* by sticking my tongue into my under lip as I walked; and pretending to take pins out of my mouth, for there Nelly always had a receptacle of all sizes, no doubt to give point to her conversation, and sticking them with a jerk into a sort of potato of black cloth that hung at the side of my purple and yellow-flowered gown, I next proceeded to irreverently fling down the brown beaver on the floor, as if I had been abjuring a heresy, but underneath it blazed the sunflower cap quite round, and circled by a broad crimson ribbon tied in a tremendous bow and ends in front; at length, I seated myself on a stool, rested both my elbows with more ease than elegance on my knees, and my chin, like an egg in an egg-cup, within both my hands; and then with an energy that would have satisfied even Demosthenes that I was in earnest, with-

out giving him the trouble of abusing me in order to excite me, I poured forth such a torrent of invective against “dat outlandish Missh Killrag, or Mad Muzzle, ash dey call her, and sure enough she samed quite mad enough for a muzzle, by the way she did be taching and praching, and tazing and twishting de poor childer out of deir siveteen sinses, just ;” concluding the whole with a tirade against “the maneness of coming schpying and poking into de room where childer was amusing dimshelves, and den to thritten to punish dem for it, inshtead of being sociable and plishent about it ; och ! bad look to such foreigneering ways, sure it banged Boney himshelf.”

While Mademoiselle and the Abbate were wiping the tears from their eyes, I ran behind the screen, and in a few seconds re-appeared as the former, the curls and flowers under the bonnet giving me a most grotesque appearance ; but, bowing in a circular direction, so as to include every one in the room in my salutation as I curtesied, I then hung my shawl on the back of a chair, upon which I seated myself, and commenced, with a deep sigh, a conversation with an imaginary Duc de Bouillon, about *notre chère France d'autre fois* ; and it would appear that my representation was so devoid of all caricature and exaggeration, that both the Abbate and Mademoiselle began to applaud, and cry, “Brava ! bravissima !” till at length the latter, forgetting all her prudence as a governess, turned to the Abbate, and said :

“ Mais c'est un grand, je dirai même un beau talent, qu'elle a, cette petite. Ah, ha, Mademoiselle Fiametta, je l'utiliserai moi, pour tenir tête à vos sarabandes !”

Success, like faith, can remove mountains; and praise is a sort of magic spur, which can convert the most jaded hack into a fleet Arab; so upon Mademoiselle's very injudicious panegyric, I darted behind the screen, and quick as lightning donned the flowing black gauze streamers, and all the rags and tags composing Lady Laura O'Shindy's dress; but as, among many others, this philosophical lady laboured under the delusion that she had a fine forehead, because it was awkwardly high, though very narrow, and curiously retreating, she used to strain all her hair off of her face, *à la Chinoise*, and having very large, round, calf-like eyes, which were incessantly rolling about, without ever, even by accident, seeing anything, this style of *coiffure* gave her the most extraordinary and ludicrous appearance of baldness, especially as her face was Quixotically long, and her nose equally so, bearing, in shape and colour, a strong family likeness to a ripe capsicum, or chili. Now, as it was impossible for me to elongate my face into the required length, Grace had painted me a card-board forehead and nose, the very image of Lady Laura's: this was, in short, a half-mask, which made me so ridiculously like her, that I think she herself, like the old lady in the

nursery tale, would have been puzzled touching her own identity, and have put the query :

“ If this be I as I suppose it be,”

the more especially as I managed to screw up my mouth into the sort of eyelet-hole which she considered the perfection of beauty ; and, as she had very large, splay feet, generally cased in black leather shoes, I had had a pair of boots made about a yard high, but stuffed up to the top, where there was a little shoe the size of my foot. These sort of invisible stilts not only raised me to be nearly Lady Laura’s height, but compelled me to adopt the stately, slow, prowling, mock-heroic measure, in which she always moved, and which an earthquake, or a house on fire, would not have hurried her out of ; for, as a contemporary writer observed, speaking of the solemn strut of Queen Elizabeth : “ There was in her Highness’s demarch more grandity than dignity.” And this “ grandity” in Lady Laura was considerably enhanced by her wearing, morning and evening, a most extraordinary sort of glass suspension-bridge, hung in chains across her forehead. These gems, like herself, were a sort of apocryphal puzzle ; for they were not diamonds, neither were they paste, nor yet Bristol stones ; no, nor even that worst of all blunders, called Irish diamonds : whatever they were, they looked as if they had once passed through a London fog, and had

never been able to shake it off. They had too pale a lemon tint to be opals, and, in short, resembled nothing so much as consolidated barley-water, set in pinchbeck.

Grace always helped me in my *scena* of Lady Laura. All the bits of old gilt cornice that we could collect, and tables with sheets of gold paper pasted on them, and phials stuck full of dirty artificial flowers, subvarted pomatum and cold-cream jars, doing duty for china, composed this *mise en scène*: in short, all the trumpery we could possibly get together, to make it like Lady Laura's rooms, in which everything was sham but the dirt. Grace was to be discovered reading: the book selected, was the nursery edition of "Tom Thumb," with the splendid illustrations of his falling over head and ears into the batter-pudding; which I have always looked upon as an exquisite allegory of first love! in which hearts, like eggs, are just out of the shell only to be battered. This work was chosen, as calculated to provoke, and give a wider scope to Lady Laura's profound and philosophical remarks.

All things being now ready, I entered, or rather sailed, slowly and majestically, from behind the screen, *minaudant* considerably, and looking like a conceited young beauty, from the right to the left, for the homage which Lady Laura felt to be her due; and indeed, at that time, it was *still due*, as it had never yet been paid.

Mademoiselle de Guilleragues and the Abbate were

both competent judges of the likeness to the original, more especially the latter, as in her universal benevolence she patronized him ; that is, she asked him to her Saturdays, and devoted at least half an hour of her valuable time to him at these philosophical *rénunions*, in order to get an Italian lesson out of him gratis. While he and Mademoiselle were still shouting with laughter, I began with sundry Dead-March-in-Saul movements, to divest myself of some of the innumerable scarves and streamers with which Lady Laura used to be swathed ; and then, slowly seating myself by Grace, I solemnly inquired, as I took the book from her hand, what she was reading ?

“ Tom Thumb,” she replied ; “ it’s *so* amusing !”

“ Oh, fie !” minced Lady Laura ; “ how can you fill your mind with colyums” (as her Ladyship invariably pronounced columns) “ of such ojus trash ?”

“ Oh, I think it is such fun,” persisted Grace, “ where poor Tommy falls into the pudding !”

“ That’s the very part of the book I most object to ; for Thomas Thumb” (Lady Laura would not have widened the eyelet-hole for the world by such a stableman expression as Tom) “ being the hero of the book, should never have been lowered ; or if it was necessary for the story that he should fall into the pudding, the author should have stated that none of it stuck to him, and that there was not a speck upon his clothes.”

"But that would not be natural," objected Grace; "indeed, it would be quite impossible."

"Oh, that's no matter. The elevating principle should always be maintained, the standard should always be raised; because it's no matter what people may *be* in reality, they should always be made perfection in books. That's what all the reviews, especially the 'Proceed the Whole Boar,' and the 'Literary Latch-Key,' thought so fine, in my last novel of the 'Philanthropic Poisoner,' where I make the hero Onomancis,* though he has poisoned his grandmother, two maiden aunts, and a miserly second cousin, yet utter such sentiments of pure benevolence, and say so often that he intends giving their respective fortunes for the relief of suffering humanity, that the high moral tone he assumes of course outweighs the three-penn'orth of arsenic, which is the only slight error he had ever been guilty of."

Mademoiselle and the Abbate were in those convulsions of laughter which become painful, and were imploring me to stop, if I did not want to kill them, when the door opened for the second time, and my Aunt Marley, like "an embodied storm," rushed into the room; and while, with an eye of fire, and a cheek of flame, she told Mademoiselle and the Abbate that they ought to be ashamed of themselves to encourage

* We suppose from the Greek word *Oνομα*, which means a name.

me in my “vulgar ribaldry,”—she, at the same time, administered to me such a swinging box on the ear, with a slap in the face by way of postscript, that it not only floored poor Lady Laura’s head-gear, barley-water ornaments and all, but broke her nose into the bargain, which I really was sorry for, as I felt “I ne’er should look upon its like again.”

Under my Aunt Marley’s gentle reproofs, which were no doubt a part of the system of universal benevolence and general philanthropy, I always preserved a stony stoicism, and no power on earth would have made me shed a tear, however great the pain of body or mind I might be suffering; in short, had I been at a preparatory school for martyrs, I could not have been better trained to silent endurance, and I now tried to console myself by thinking *chacun à son tour*; and, if I had been taking off Lady Laura, my Aunt Marley had favoured us with a *charade en action* of her other name.

“I desire,” said my aunt, “that that young wretch may be sent to bed, without any supper, immediately:” it was then only six o’clock; “only,” concluded my aunt, “let her be made to write to her vile father first, and tell him that instead of giving her his disgusting talent for mimicry, he had better send her money to buy clothes, as I can’t for ever go on spending the money my uncle gives me for myself, on his brats. Come, Grace, darling, don’t begin to cry,

because I have tried, for the sake of humanity, to correct the idiotic frivolity of your wretch of a sister. Go, Miss, go and write to your father directly, you're worthy of him."

"Poor papa, I am so glad ! I love to write to him!" said I, clapping my hands, and at the same time indulging in a hardened sort of don't care jump.

Now, like many things in this chameleon world of ours, this was, at one and the same time, both true and false ; for, though I was fond of corresponding with my poor father, I detested (as indeed I do to this day) the manual labour of writing ; and my pot-hooks and hangers were at that time so atrocious, that Mr. Quillup, the writing master, generally wrote the letters in pencil first, and I inked them over ; just as Mr. Tint, the drawing master, used to do more than half Fiametta's water-coloured landscapes, which were afterwards exhibited to an admiring circle as hers ; while, though Grace had not yet got beyond crayons, every touch in them was, at least, her own. With this last command of my Aunt Marley's, I was marched off to write to my father, and ultimately to bed ; poor Mademoiselle de Guilleragues shrugging her shoulders, and muttering :

"Ciel ! est-il possible ? et cela s'appelle une dame !"

I soon forgot all my grievances in that profound and dreamless sleep, which only childhood knows ; but at eleven o'clock that same night I was awakened with a

gentle pinching of the cheek, by my Aunt Marley. Was I dreaming, or was I awake ? but there she stood, not frowning and angry, as I had last seen her, but radiant with smiles and beauty, and glittering with jewels. She was followed by a lady, with peculiarly bright black eyes, dark hair, divided down the centre, and flowing in ringlets, upon a neck as white as the ceiling itself, and cheeks like "the rose that's newly sprung in June ;" her hands and arms, which were equally white, and models in shape, were covered with bracelets and rings. She wore a Brussels lace dress over pink satin, and very short petticoats, I suppose to display a beautiful small and well-turned foot and ankle. I afterwards learned that this flowing hair was a wig, this exquisite complexion paint, and the lady sixty-four, for it was the Margravine of Anspach. In the back-ground of this tableau stood Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, Nelly, and the two English nursery-maids, looking very much as the seven burgesses of Calais may be supposed to have looked when going out to be hanged for the good of their country, before Queen Philippa begged them off.

"Get up, Mirry, darling," said my Aunt Marley affectionately, still playfully pulling my cheek : "I want you to take off Lady Laura, for this beautiful lady here," pointing to the Margravine ; "and you must give us the Duc de Bouillon, too, which Mademoiselle de Guilleragues says you can do equally well ; he him-

self is dying to see it, so get up quickly, and let them dress you, and then come down to the *sèvre* boudoir, there will be only the Marggravine, the Duke, and myself."

Here the Marggravine added her entreaties to my Aunt Marley's, kissed me, told me I was "a love," and remarked to my aunt that I had such a charmingly open countenance, which was likely enough, as I was yawning very widely at the time. I hope I am neither sulky nor resentful; I kissed my Aunt Marley, for I always did so with pleasure, whenever she asked me, for she was very nice to kiss, being so handsome, having such a pleasant skin, lovely mouth and teeth, and a sweet violet sort of breath. I also got up, was dressed, and went down, for all *that*, I was equally glad to do; but I felt the bitter injustice so keenly, of waking me at eleven o'clock at night, and coaxing and entreating me to do that for which I had been punished and sent to bed only five hours before, that neither threats nor entreaties could induce me to take off any one that night but myself, as I soon made a precipitous retreat, to avoid further importunity. Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, however, faithfully promising that as the Marggravine (who was always either acting or dancing,—*car soixante-quatre ans, n'empêchent pas les sentiments!*) was to give scenes from Shakspeare and Racine on the following evening, in the small private theatre belonging to the house, I

should also give *my* scenes from nature ; but as “Tartufe” is generally more *à-propos* to all times and places, the Marggravine eventually deserted Shakspeare, and Racine, for Molière.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE next morning after family prayers (at which Mademoiselle de Guilleragues being a Catholic was not present), just as we were adjourning to the study, my uncle with his arm round Grace's neck, and I with Fido in my arms, and Pomba at my heels, Mademoiselle knocked at the door, and requested to have five minutes' conversation with Sare George.

"*Mademoiselle, je suis à vos ordres,*" said he rising, and offering her a chair.

"*Mille grâces, Monsieur ; I shall not detain you one* five minute, what I have to say," said Mademoiselle, rising, and walking to the embrasure of the bay window, whither my uncle followed her, and where they conversed for some time in too low a tone to be audible, Mademoiselle gesticulating with much animation, and my uncle occasionally starting back a

pace or two, and saying “No!” and then pulling his under lip, and looking back at me with a smile playing in his eyes, which was only prevented from overflowing his whole face by the interposition of a pinch of snuff. To his “No!” Mademoiselle replied :

“Parole d’honneur.”

My uncle then seemed to put in an objection, pulling his right ear, and looking very lachrymosely at his companion the while ; if it was not an objection to what she had said, it was at least a difficulty, or something unpleasant ; as I distinctly heard the final words : “But Mrs. Marley and Miss Paulett.”

“Pas si bête,” replied Mademoiselle, laughing, “I get leave of de higher power first.”

“Ha ! ha ! ha !” laughed my uncle, now rubbing his hands in perfect delight, as he added aloud : “Enfin, en véritable Guilleragues, je vois bien, Mademoiselle, que vous êtes rompue à toute la politique connue ; et même inconnue ! ha ! ha ! ha !” and so saying, he walked into the study which was off the library, and whither we all followed. Fido had scarcely commeneed his *pas de fascination*, when there was a knock at the door.

“Come in,” said my uncle, suddenly stopping in the midst of Malbrook, at the most interesting turn of the air, that which announces the hero’s return *à la Páque, ou à la Trinité*, while Fido, not even waiting for the first epoch specified, thought it better to take advantage of the pause, and return imme-

dately to his natural position, on all fours. The intruder was Mole, whose special mission on earth appeared to be that of hunting us up; so he now came to say, that "my aunts wanted me immediately in the Chinese breakfast-room."

"And not me?" asked Grace.

"Mrs. Marley only said Miss Miriam, Miss."

Heaven help poor Miss Miriam; she felt amazingly as if she had received a summons to appear before the Holy Inquisition; for never was she so cited to appear alone, without there was some terrible catastrophe impending: however, Mole had said Mrs. Marley and Miss Paulett, so I began to take courage, knowing from experience, that even when my Aunt Marley sat as Grand Inquisitor, my Aunt Bell when present was sure vigorously to oppose her veto. It was then only ten o'clock, so that I really had not had time to commit any fresh misdemeanour on that day. Oh, it must be that my Aunt Marley, not being able to scold me on the preceding night before the Margravine for my disobedience in not only refusing to play Punch when I was desired, but also for growling like the dog Toby, and slinking back to bed, I was now going to be paid off, as the sailors say, only not quite so pleasantly. So I looked imploringly at Mademoiselle de Guilleragues, in the hope that she would send word that we had not yet done our lessons, and that I should go as soon as I had. But instead of this, so seldom do things fall out as we plan and as we wish,

nor (in justice to God's mercy) it must be owned even always do they do so as we fear, Mademoiselle kissed me, and said :

"Go, my dear, and tell your aunts I shall be much obliged if dey will let you be in de school-room by twelve at latest, as Monsieur Angelot shall be here to give you a leçon de danse."

"But it is not Monsieur Angelot's day, this is only Wednesday," objected I.

"C'est égal, il va venir," said Mademoiselle, conducting me by both shoulders to the door.

With a palpitating heart, I followed Mole up the front stairs to the first landing, then through a red baize door, down three steps, and up another flight, (for it was a double house). Any one fond of bargains might have had my life for the lowest possible coin of this or any other realm, when Mole flung open the door of the Chinese room, so called from having a gold paper thickly populated with pink Chinese women, blue mandarins, and pea-green children, planting tea, gathering tea, and drinking tea, in which latter occupation my aunts were also engaged, for they were seldom together without there being hot water of some kind.

"Come in, darling, don't be afraid," said my Aunt Bell, pointing to a chair next to hers. Thus encouraged, I advanced, going first with a still trembling heart to my Aunt Marley, and saying :

"Good morning, Aunt Marley."

"Good morning, my dear," said she, kissing me : "would you like any more breakfast?"

My Aunt Bell, who, from long experience, was well aware of my somewhat undue partiality for thick cream and green tea, answered for me, as she placed a cup before me, leaving in the handsomest manner the cream and sugar entirely to my own discretion. I used, and therefore never will abuse them, though I suspect I was also indebted to them for a dreadful headache for the rest of the day, or it might be over-work, for I fagged hard that day : but of this by-and-bye.

"Would you like some prawns, Miriam?" asked my Aunt Marley, seeing that I looked wistfully at the pretty sort of red catherine-wheel before me.

"I should very much, if I may."

"To be sure, my child : the liberty of a human being should never be restricted," said my Aunt Marley. The voice for its placidity, and the sentiment for its universality, were both worthy of Lady Laura O'Shindy ; but, being far beyond my capacity, I stuck to the prawns, which I was better able to digest.

I don't know how aldermen feel after a whole course of turtle, but I should think very valiant, for only after a second breakfast I know I felt equal to anything : so looking my Aunt Marley full in the face, I delivered Mademoiselle de Guilleragues' message, about my being in the school-room by twelve, to take a

dancing lesson, with as much boldness and authority, as if I had been a Garter King-at-Arms.

"And be sure you pay great attention to your dancing lesson to-day," said my Aunt Marley. And both my aunts looked at each other, and laughed.

"Whisper, Mirry," said my Aunt Bell, bending down to my ear; "tell me, did you ever try to take off Don José?"

"Dear me, no! that was far too awful." (The idea of such a thing even had never come into my head. I should as soon have thought of meddling with Bonaparte himself, Mrs. Boney, or the other—it's better not to mention his name even at this distance of time.) "No, never!" said I faintly.

"But don't you think you could?"

"Oh, of course I could, but I'd rather not."

"What, not to oblige!"

"Oblige who?"

"Why, Uncle Paulett."

"Oh, of course, anything for him! But he'd be angry, wouldn't he?"

"No, he'd be amused beyond everything."

"Would he, really?"

"Yes; do you think you could do him by this evening?"

"I don't know, it's so long since I have seen him; I've got to recollect him; but I'll try."

"There's a good child!" and my Aunt Marley rolled me over a peach, while the puzzle rolled in my

head, how I could be a good child and get peaches and cream to-day, the 15th of June, 1813, for doing the very thing for which I was called a vulgar little wretch, and punished and sent to bed yesterday, June the 14th, 1813. I might have thought till now, and I should not have been a bit nearer the solution. So it was perhaps lucky that James at this juncture entered with a letter, and said, the man who brought it was below, and wished very much to see either Mrs. Marley or Miss Paulett.

“Dear me!” said my Aunt Bell, breaking the large black seal, and running her eye over the letter, “it’s from my mother, and that goose, Nelly’s son, Dermot, is the bearer of it. What could have brought him over here?”

“Oh! do let him come up,” said I, laughing: “I should like to see if he’s still ‘extramely bould, Ma’am.’”

“Has he seen his mother or Lady Paulett?” inquired my Aunt Bell, without taking any notice of my request.

“He has seen Lady Paulett, Ma’am, but he won’t see his mother, and begged she might not be told he was here, as she would be very angry with him.”

“Let him come up,” said my Aunt Bell.

And five minutes after the door re-opened, and Dermot pitched head foremost into the room, while his right leg, in the scrape with which he accompanied this graceful bow, was elongated horizontally behind

him to the great risk of Mr. James's teeth, which were fully visible to the naked eye grinning in the background. Whatever Dermot's juvenile attractions might have been, he certainly ran no risk of having his head turned, or turning anybody else with them now. Short and thick set: not only were his shoulders those of a man of six feet high, but the ulterior portion of his person displayed that peculiar and exuberant species of conformation generally confined to female Hottentots, and supposed to be a provisional dispensation of nature, to enable them to initiate their offspring by times into sedentary habits.

A frieze coat, with large brass buttons and very short tails, set out itself and this portion of his figure to the greatest advantage; his waistcoat was of bright yellow with large reddish-brown leaves all over it, his shirt-collar highly starched and rising all round the back of his head, nearly as high as his ears: his hair was straight and lanky, and of a dusty brown, hanging like the choke of an artichoke over his ears and collar; a rim like a fillet round his head having been formed by the pressure of his hat; a red cotton-handkerchief was tied round his neck, the ends sticking straight out to the right and the left, like the wings of a spread-eagle. A large steel single-linked watch-chain dangled from his fob, with one turn-over brass seal, while an immense knob, or round red glass bead, or it might have been red cornelian, about the size of a turnip-radish, played Lord Chancellor to this great seal, and formed a

glowing contrast to the unpretending brown corduroy trousers upon which it rested, the said cords being very shiny at the knees, and very short and wide at the ankles, thereby revealing a pair of pepper-and-salt worsted stockings, terminating in a pair of well-greased brogues an inch and a half thick.

Under his left arm, he carried a huge black-thorn stick, while in his right hand he held a brownish-black felt hat with a very high crown, but much bulged out like a cupola at the top, with no traces of its ever having been flat, while round its narrow rim ran a narrow cord, tied in a small bow in front; his coat sleeves being exceedingly short, made him look as if he had lost his own clothes while bathing, and had swum into some other boy's, for Dermot was an Irish boy of three-and-twenty. His cheek-bones were extremely high, his nose was very short and red, sinking in in the centre like a scoop, and turning up at the end with the nostrils wide open, as if to keep his brains well aired; his mouth was very wide also, and so crowded with slightly projecting teeth, that the lips had some difficulty in closing over them; his eyes were blue, but with such red rims round them, that they had almost the effect of fuchsias. However, the only difficulty he himself appeared to have with his looks was caused by a sort of vagabond smile which he was for ever trying to overtake, pull suddenly up, and drive down his throat as it were, but all to no purpose, for if he got rid of it one minute it was back the next.

"What on earth brought you here, Dermot?" asked my Aunt Bell.

"Nothing on earth, Ma'am. I cum by wather, at laste nearly the same ting, by say, Ma'am, a-boord the 'Molly Malone,' Ma'am."

"Well, but what put it into your head to come?"

"Which? ish it what dhruv me into going, Ma'am?"

"Well, yes—what induced you to leave Ireland?"

"Och! divil a much of an injushemint, Ma'am, but the vury revarse, for it wash that spaldeen of an English middle-man, of Sur Joseph's, (de Saxon,) dat riz de rint on me shure, and I taught if I cud shee Sur Joseph, or any of de famly, may be I'd shoon make dat thafe of a Brooksh whistle to anoder thune."

"Why, you silly fellow, Sir Joseph's in Spain."

"Oh! indade Ma'am, sho I heerd, more'sh de pity; for its meshelf dat's not got where wid all to git back."

"Then you should apply to Lady Paulett; you are her husband's tenant, not ours."

"I did, Ma'am," said Dermot with a sigh, looking into his hat and shaking his head at it, as if it knew a great deal, but was too discreet to disclose it.

"And didn't she do anything for you?"

Dermot was silent, but setting his teeth, puffing out his lips and making very large eyes at his hat, which innocent victim he finally gave a tremendous thump to with his clenched fist on the top of its crown, that

drove it inwards like a butterfly net, or the crater of Mount Vesuvius. My Aunt Marley now repeated the question.

“Oh ! indade, Ma’am,” said Dermot at last, turning his head quite round and looking towards the window as if he was blushing, “I cudn’t.”

“Why not, pray ?”

“Becase itsh too bad intirely, Ma’am.”

“What’s too bad ?” asked both my aunts in a breath.

“What Sur Joseph’s wife dun to me, Ma’am.”

“Nonsense !”

“Oh ! indade, ladies, it wash a great dale worse dan nonsense ; Dermot Bawn ish not de boy to mind a little nonshense wid gentle or shimple.”

“Well, but can’t you say what it was ?”

“I cudn’t Ma’am, I cudn’t ; itsh too bad intirely, and de shaints forbid dat I should ever tell such a ting on any of de noble name of Paulett ; and dat a shaymale woman, too !”

Up to this point, my aunts had only been curious, but now they grew desperate, and the idea of Lady Paulett’s having done anything too disgraceful to be told, was such music to my Aunt Bell’s ears, that she thought she ought at least to remunerate the musician ; so taking a guinea out of her purse she held it up to Dermot, and it was evident her expectations were raised to the highest pitch, for she told me to leave the room ; but I preferred remaining, so merely sank down

with my hands on the floor half under the table, and she was too intent upon forcing out this portentous secret to remark that I had not obeyed her.

"Now, Dermot," said she, holding up the guinea, "I'll give you this, if you will tell me what Lady Paulett did?"

"Oh, den indade whin one can part wid a sacret for nine times its value, it would be a sin and shame to kape it," said Dermot ; and here there was a momentary pause of such breathless suspense, even I, listening with my mouth open, that the silence almost became audible. At this juncture Dermot, wiping the back of his right-hand hastily across his mouth, made three measured strides to where my aunts were sitting, and bending forward, first to my Aunt Marley, holding his hat up to the side of his face, and leaving his right leg in abeyance in mid air, like John of Bologna's Mercury, and then pursuing the same pantomime to my Aunt Bell, he said in a sonorous stage whisper, that resounded through the whole room, and might have been heard outside, if James was playing "*the listening slave*" at the door : "*As I'm a living man she guv me half a crown !*"

Disappointed as both my aunts were at this wonderful announcement, it was impossible to help laughing at the ludicrous seriousness of Dermot's face, especially when he stepped back with the same measured strides with which he had advanced, and said, pulling up his shirt-collar, which was truly a work of supererogation :

"Oh, indade, ladies, I dun't wondther at yer no saming to b'lave it, dere is shome tingsh *too bad* to bay b'laved, and datsh one uv dem."

"But why won't you see your mother? you ought to do so?"

"Why, you shee Ma'am I've outgrow'd her."

"Outgrown her! what on earth do you mean? you are not as tall as she is, and even if you were, surely, that should not prevent you seeing her?"

"Oh, itsh not by raison of her hoight, Ma'am, but mine; for you say (see) when onchet a 'ooman, and dat 'ooman yer moder, hash had de bating of ye, dey do be mighty apt to forgit dat yer back iver growsh too broad for de schtick, or yer ares (ears) too big to be boxshed, and datsh all I've to shay agin my moder; for if she'd only kape her handsh to hershelf, and not make sho fray (free) wid me in de way of thomping she'd be as good a little 'ooman ash iver shtopped."

"Well, but what do you mean to do?" asked my Aunt Marley.

"Oh, indade, Ma'am, itsh not what *I* mane to do, but *you* mane to have de gudnessh to do for me."

"Why, really," replied my aunt, "I don't very well know what you're fit for: what would you like to be?"

"At won time, Ma'am, I tought of lishting for a sojer, but to tell you de trute de idaya of fading de crowsh in furrin partsh ish not plishent; and shinsh I've shane de jauntlemen below schtairsh, sho grand

and sho lazy-like in deir foine blue and shilver and white uneyforums, I tink I'd like to be in de fut, Ma'am."

"In the foot?"

"Yesh, Ma'am, a futman."

Both my aunts burst out laughing, in which I heartily joined, at the idea of Dermot as a footman; so imagining that his "vaulting ambition had o'erleaped itself," he added, arranging the indentures of his hat:

"Or if you tink a futman's too much, ladies, I shudn't mind beginning as a tay boy. Shure I cud have got an iligant plache ash tay boy, in de town of Clanfuddle, only I wudn't demane meshelf by going to sarvish in de teeth of my own eshtate, as I may shay; for of a foine day, from Mrs. Major Meginesses back windeys, I cud see de tatch of de cabin, and de pate schstack, ash plain ash de noshe on me fashe."

"By the bye," said my Aunt Marley, "I recollect now that Lady Laura O'Shindy wants a servant; she's so odd in all her ways that I think he might do very well for her," concluded she, lowering her voice, and appealing to my Aunt Bell.

"The very thing! and then her *ménage* would be perfect; not a single absurdity wanting," laughed my Aunt Bell; "for as my uncle remarked the other day, Burke says, 'there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous,' and unfortunately it is just this

one fatal step that poor Lady Laura is always taking."

"Well," said my Aunt Marley aloud, addressing Dermot, "should you like to live with Lady Laura O'Shindy?"

"Oh indade, Ma'am, I hope I'd know me plache better nor to have a shindy wid any lady dat I lived wid," said Dermot, drawing up with a stupendous air of self-respet.

"It's to be hoped so," said my Aunt Marley, laughing; "but I'm speaking of Lady Laura O'Shindy, Lord Clanfuddle's sister: you know who I mean: she married Captain O'Shindy."

"Whew!" half whistled Dermot, placing his forefinger at the side of his own nose; "you've made me sinsible, Ma'am, de lady dat wash ordered long walksh by Doctor O'Hoolhagan, who toult her to follow her noshe; just, ave coorshe I remember now, for it wash a common shaying about our plache, when dey did be talking of de Lord's family, to obsarve: 'Thrue for ye, Lord Clanfuddle knows mosht; but den shure it's sixh of won, and half a dozen of de oder, for Lady Laura hash most nose.'"

"Well, shall I speak to Lady Laura about taking you?"

"I'd be behoulden to you, Ma'am, if you wud. May I ax what short of uneyforum she gives her sarvents? The Clanfuddle uneyforum, I know, ish

crimshon and goold, wid white fachings ; but I've heerd dat whin ladies marries its deir hushbansh uneylim dat deir sarvents wearsh, so dat may make a differ."

"I should'nt think," said my Aunt Bell, laughing, and turning to my Aunt Marley, "that poor Mr. O'Shindy was entitled to any arms, and therefore can scarcely have a livery ; so Lady Laura, with her love of the beautiful, as she calls it, which enables her totally to dispense with the useful and the necessary, and makes her have the strangest freaks in dress and furniture, by way of what she calls assorting colours after nature, has I believe, condemned her servants (as she calls her solitary "*tay boy*," though the constant change of them does make them plural) to what she denominates a rural livery, namely, a grass-green coat, with yellow facings. Lady Laura's livery, or uniform, as you call it," concluded my Aunt Bell, aloud, addressing Dermot, "is green, with yellow cuffs and collar, and the Clanfuddle crests on the buttons—a boar and goose, gorged with a ducal coronet."

"Grane and yaller ! ye say, Ma'am ?" cried Dermot, in a shrill voice, striding forward two steps, to make sure that he had caught the sounds a-right, "Shure I'd look mighty like a field of buther-cups in such a uneylim as dat ; de papple might talk of de moving bog den, wid some raison, when dey'd say me marching down de strate ; den if datsh de uneylim Ma'am, I

suppose her Leedyship givesh only a wishp of hay for de hat instead of a goold band ?”

“ Why what difficulties you are making, Dermot, I thought you wished to go out to service ?”

“ I do sho, Ma’am, but there’s a differ I’m thinking betune (between) going out to sarvice and going out to grassh !”

“ It’s all the same thing for you, Dermot, depend upon it,” laughed my Aunt Bell, “ for you’d be equally an ass to refuse.”

“ Well,” replied Dermot, with a sigh of philosophical resignation, as he appeared to be mentally consoling himself with the reflection of Solomon’s inferiority in all his glory to the lilies of the field, and why not to the buttercups, too ? “ Well, Ma’am, the Lord knowsh best, and ash Lady Laura ish a grassh widdy, I shuppose it’s not for the loikes of me to mind for wanchet (once) in a way, being a grassh tay boy !”

My aunts, as soon as they could speak for laughing, promised to use their influence with Lady Laura on his behalf, and in the meanwhile, recommended him to lose no more time in seeing his mother, as she would have good reason to be angry with him if she heard he was come, and had never asked for her.

“ May be, Leedys, yez wud have de gudness,” said he, now compressing his much persecuted hat like a nut-crackers, “ to shend for her here, and jest lay yer commandsh on her to kape her hands off me.”

With another laugh, my aunts acceded to this request, and ringing the bell to have the breakfast-things removed and Nelly summoned, the servant who answered it announced to my aunts that the Margravine was up, and wished to see them in her dressing-room, and to me, that Monsieur Angelot was waiting in the school-room.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON my way to the school-room I met Mr. Waltham, who was carefully examining every step of the stairs, and muttering to himself: "It's no use, I'm sure it must have blown away upon the ramparts when I took out the note to give to Colonel Clavering."

"Have you lost anything, Mr. Waltham?" asked I.

"Yes, my dear Miss Miriam, I have had a serious loss, and if you could help me to find it, I should be very grateful to you. I have lost a fifty-pound note, that I was going to send to my mother; and what she'll do, or what I shall do, I'm sure I don't know."

"I'm sure," said I, "that Uncle Paulett will give you another;" that being the readiest consolation that I could suggest.

"Oh! for heaven's sake, Miss Miriam," cried he, colouring up; "whatever you do, don't tell Sir George;

first, because he would replace it I'm afraid ; and next, because he would be so very angry with my carelessness, and justly, too ; for he has no toleration for want of order and unbusiness-like habits, and he would think I was unfit for the place I hold, if I could not even take care of, and manage my own very trifling affairs, which trifling though they be, comparatively speaking, are of such vital importance to those I love best in the world ;" and the poor young man's eyes filled with tears.

" Where do you think you lost it ?" said I.

" I fear it was on the ramparts, where the wind was very high, and that it must have blown into the sea. I was opening my pocket-book to give a note Sir George had sent me with to Colonel Clavering, and I fear it was then that it must have dropped out."

" We were going to the rope-walk," said I, " after dinner ; but I'll look for it everywhere, as soon as we've done our lessons ; and I dare say Mademoiselle de Guilleragues will let us walk to the ramparts instead ; so don't fret about it, for between us all, I dare say it will be found."

" Thank you, dear," said Mr. Waltham, patting my head, " but as I'm to see Sir George at five to give him Colonel Clavering's answer, pray don't say anything to him about it, there's a good girl."

As I was by no means of Mr. Waltham's opinion on this subject, I made no promise, but broke from him, and began ascending the stairs three steps at once to make up for the time I had lost in talking to him.

"*Arrive donc!*" said Mademoiselle, impatiently, when I entered the school-room, where I found Monsieur Angelot busily engaged fastening a pair of blunt gilt spurs on some little red boots, while he himself had a pair of similar ones on, and also blue full trousers tight at the ankles and braided down the sides and embroidered with silver; while he wore a short jacket or rather vest, with pointed ends in front, richly and elaborately embroidered in silver; a little scarlet-velvet Hungarian cap on his head, very much on one side, with a straight spun-glass feather in it.

I laughed when I saw him, but exclaimed :

"What a beautiful dress!"

"Well," said he, "you are to have just such another, only with a tunic over the trowsers, if you are a good girl, and learn the dance I am going to teach you this morning, so as to be able to dance it this evening before your uncle and all the company staying in the house."

"On the stage," interposed Mademoiselle.

"Oh, I don't think I'd have courage to dance before so many people."

"Nonsense," said Mademoiselle de Guilleragues; "look at Miss Fiametta and her Boleros, she has no *mauvaise honte*, and why should you?"

"But she dances so well."

"And what's to prevent you, pray, from doing the same, you, who can imitate every one so exactly; there is nothing to prevent your doing everything well

if you have but a proper model set before you ; and as you have that unlucky talent for mimicry, I must see if I can't turn it to good account, and make it available in all your studies. I have ménagé une petite surprise for your good uncle Sare George, after dat eternal Bolero to-night, and Madame Son Altesse la Margravine shall be delighted, too."

" But what dance is it :—a bolero ?"

" Mieux que ça : a dance dey have never yet seen in England, de Cracovienne," said Mademoiselle ; " so now I shall tank you to imitate Monsieur Angelot till you shall be him."

" Oh," said I, laughing, "that would be false coining, wouldn't it ?" This was in allusion to Mademoiselle having told us that there was a coin called an Angelot, current in France at the time of Philippe de Valois ; for she had a very pleasant way of teaching us not only the gossip of history, but of filtering for us its truths ; and not stultifying our minds and cultivating our prejudices by those hollow, shallow fallacies, stretched on the narrow Procrustes bed of party-spirit, and called " Abridgments of History for the use of Schools ;" whereby young England is taught such preposterous falsehoods, as to call Queen Elizabeth "The Virgin Queen," and to consider her as a great princess, instead of being early taught that no one so utterly vicious and wicked as she was, could be great, for there is no real greatness, but goodness. Omnipotence itself, had it only created this stupendous

universe with its crowning miracle, of immortal souls to destroy and not to save, might have been wonderful, but would not have been great, for goodness is the universal and harmonious voice of light, that speaks *to all* from out its works.

For this reason did Mademoiselle de Guilleragues teach us to look upon that be-incensed beldam, Queen Elizabeth, as what she really was, namely, Harry the Eighth in petticoats ; in short, she skimmed for us Whittaker, Campbell, Murdin, Stuart, Smith, Higgins, and Heylin, whose combined bundle of facts clearly establish that Elizabeth's politics were one vast system of chicanery, and wrong towards all nations, and her life one of mischief and misery—of mischief to others, and misery to herself ; hence her lowerings of ill-will, and her whirlwinds of tyranny ; hence too, her craving for flattery and false renown, as there are none so tenacious of their reputation as the bad evil doers, who will go miles out of their way, should any of their iniquities transpire to threaten the innocent hearers of them with unmeasured vengeance and actions for defamation if they presume even to believe what they have heard ; whereas, when the good hear the grossest calumnies of themselves, they only smile with either pity or contempt, and say : "It's a comfort to think it should only be a calumny, and not the truth ;" and therein consists at once their best defence and greatest consolation. Elizabeth's murder of her guest and cousin, Mary, is only one among her

many crimes ; impatient like all villains in whatever thwarted her villainy ; she is, for her, almost amiable in her taunts to Amyas Paulet and Drury, after their refusal to assassinate Mary, Queen of Scots ; when she merely calls them “ nice and precise fellows, who in words would do great things for her safety, but in deed perform nothing ;” and yet, this vestal, this nymph, this Diana, (query Hecate) ? as she was then called—this murderer as she really was —(forwarding the butchery of the St. Bartholomew in France with her gold, while her rank hypocrisy affected to deplore it with her tears. Oh ! surely the tears of hypocrites must make the fires of the infernal regions blaze more fiercely !) This Gloriana, sweet, tender, pious soul, was almost petrified with horror at the barely narrated execution of her unfortunate kinswoman, which she had without remorse plotted and commanded. Another proof this, were any more wanted, of how appalling even the name of vice is to the vicious and the criminal, especially when it is the sound of their own vices and crimes that falls upon their ear ; the wrong is nothing, *the having it known everything.*

Camden expresses a sort of surprise, that “ not content to mangle the fine person of Mary with the murderous axe, she proceeded to a still greater excess of guilt, and exerted all the arts of hell to murder her reputation ;” but in so doing, he evinces but little knowledge of human nature, for violent aggressors have but one way of expiating the great

wrong they have done their victims, and that is, by blotting it out with still greater ones, and telling lies of them till they themselves believe them truths, which is to the worthless and the wicked a species of inverse absolution. Truly, as one of the historians of this worst, bad woman, (not excepting Catherine de Medicis), asserts : "Elizabeth had no sensibilities of tenderness, and no sentiments of generosity ;" while another adds, with equal truth : "She looked not forward to the awful verdict of history ; she had no dread even of the infinitely more awful doom of God." And Dr. Campbell observes : "Elizabeth seems to have been in all her capacities of wickedness, a woman exceedingly wicked, to have united equally the sensual and the malignant corruptions of mankind in her own person ; to have had them in a very violent degree, and to have superadded the highest degree of hypocrisy to both ; and so have been a very prodigy of flagitiousness from all."*

Elizabeth's religion (if it be not almost a blasphemy to couple so holy a term with *her* name) may be estimated by her underhand bribery, and abetting of the massacre of the Huguenots in France, in order to throw odium

* To quote from the ablest historian of them all—the eloquent pages of Macaulay, not then written—wherein the rise and progress of the Reformation is thus summed up : "The work which had been begun by Henry, the murderer of his wives, was continued by Somerset, the murderer of his brother, and completed by Elizabeth, the murderer of her guest."

upon the Catholics, and at their expense show forth the superior purity of newly-budding Protestantism in her own kingdom ; for, from first to last, of the self-styled Reformation, the Established Church has been nothing more than a first-class *State Engine*. Her revolting habit of swearing, and the impious oaths she selected, may be evidenced as another proof of her piety ; but more conclusive than all, is the mixture of the ludicrous and the terrible in her closing scene, which, as Collier has it, “ was indeed dark and disconsolate ;” as must be that of all those who, like her, have not been content with doing much and terrible wrong, but must also insist upon being thought right, and concealing the hideous features of vice with the fair mask of virtue.

Robert Cary (Earl of Monmouth), one of her most assiduous courtiers, says, in the Memoirs of his own life : “ I found the Queen, in her last sickness, seated upon cushions, where she persisted in remaining on the ground four days and nights at least. I used the best words I could to persuade her from this melancholy, but it was too deeply rooted in her heart to be removed. In her discourse with me, she fetched not so few as forty or fifty great sighs, whereas I had never known her to fetch a sigh before, except when the Queen of Scots was beheaded. She refused all sustenance, and also to go to bed ; and she grew worse and worse, because she would be so, and refused all remedies.”

Camden says that she called herself “a miserable and forlorn woman,” and exclaimed, “they have put a yoke about my neck ; I have no one to trust in. My condition is strangely changed.”

But Parsons, in his discussion of Barlow’s “Answer,” gives the following stranger particulars of this bad woman’s departure on her long journey. He had them from the courtiers of one who was going where she would find no more. “The Queen told two ladies of her court, as she lay in bed at the beginning of her last illness, that she thought she saw her own body lean and fearful, and in light of fire ; and from that, she left her bed, and would not return to it ; and she said on one occasion, that if her attendants knew what she had seen the last time she was in bed, they would not ask her to go there any more.

“As for the prelates who came to her, requesting her to consider her approaching end, she cholericly rated them, and bid them be packing : indeed, her Highness’s Grace seemed to place more confidence in charms and spells than in prayer to God ; and she wore (and had done so for a long time) a piece of gold in her ruff, by means of which an old woman in Wales was said to have attained the age of one hundred years ; and she also had the card called the Queen of Hearts nailed to the bottom of her chair for luck, where it was found after her death.”

Oh, great and mighty Protestant Princess, whose much-vaunted masculine understanding, it would ap-

pear, only served to give you masculine vices, and the still more masculine privilege of exercising them with impunity, surely spells and filters, e'en golden though they might be, and giving the poor Queen of Hearts a set down, was after all a sorry way of defending the faith ; at any rate, the poor Queen of Hearts, so defended, might have exclaimed with Socrates, "Heaven defend me from my friends !" For my own part, I'd rather have been the Queen of Scots, even had I, on that account, been doomed, like a parish bride, to undergo a third time of "ax(e)ing," than have been that hapless Queen of Hearts, to have sat thus, *nolens volens*, "in the seat of the scornful!"

But to return to Monsieur Angelot, whom Queen Elizabeth (to do her justice) would not have neglected for so long a time, in consideration of his being remarkably good-looking, and having a most symmetrical figure and graceful *tournure*, which, in this Hungarian dress, "was set out to the best advantage," though not exactly "to pleasure the Queen," as in the case of Sir Walter Raleigh.

The spurs having been at length adjusted to the little red boots, Grace, who seemed in as great a state of excitement as Mademoiselle de Guilleragues herself, put them on for me ; and just as I was clanking my spurs in the greatest possible delight, a knock was heard at the door, and Mademoiselle having said, "Come in," Madame Morel entered, with a pair of red, full trowsers, a blue cashmere tunic, seamed with silver-braid, and

the little red *soufflé*-pan sort of red cap and feather, saying the jacket and white sleeves would be finished by eight in the evening ; and as the exhibition was not to take place before ten or eleven, Mademoiselle expressed herself much satisfied with Madame Morel's expedition. A short flitting behind the screen soon enabled me to achieve my toilet, and when I re-appeared, Angelot saluted me, *en militaire*, with his right hand open at the side of his forehead. I immediately returned it in a similar manner ; while he and Mademoiselle cried in the same breath :

“ Fort bien, à merveille ! ”

Mademoiselle sola-ing *ça-ira* ; but quickly adding, as she crossed herself, “ Dieu me pardonne ces vilaines paroles ! ”

As it was utterly impossible that any one could play the violin and dance the Cracovienne too, or at least that they could play first-fiddle, if they did, Angelot for once discarded his beloved Cremona, and Mademoiselle seated herself at the piano, to play the air for him to dance to, he ordering me to do everything I saw him do ; but I told him that I was sure I never could learn it in that way, but that if he would have the goodness to dance it twice from beginning to end, I thought I could then manage it. Accordingly he did so, bowing as if round the theatre first, but still *en militaire*, and at the conclusion, Mademoiselle taking it for granted that I was to be overwhelmed with plaudits, taught me how to curtsey gracefully,

with my hand pressed to my heart, dumb-showing the “gratitude that’s too deep for words,” (which indeed, I suppose, all gratitude is, as one never hears a word about it from those whom one has served the most). This I found the most difficult part of the lesson, perhaps from its being too well known to the public at large to admit of any inaccuracy in my amateur version of it; as in fact it was the stage edition of that great Husting’s epic, “The Proudest Day of My Life!”

At length, having succeeded, to the mutual satisfaction of Mademoiselle and of Angelot, in indenting the intense gratitude I should have to feel deeper into my heart, from the pressure from without of both my hands, I commenced the Cracovienne, meeting with every encouragement from the assembled trio. Although I made three mistakes the first time of dancing it; but having mastered it the second time, and given to my feet due emphasis, and to my face due expression, Mademoiselle was so enchanted, that she rushed from the piano, and clasped me in her arms; while Angelot, not presuming to do likewise, hugged himself—few men can embrace what they hold dearer—and declared, that if his grandfather had been called *Le Dieu de la Danse*, or *Le Dé-o de la Danse*, as he called himself (for Angelot’s mother had been a daughter of *the Vestris*), that I deserved to be called *La Déesse de la Danse*; and Grace gave it as her decided opinion, that the golden clink of my spurs would beat the castanets hollow; and so they ought, for two

mortal hours had I devoted to achieving this charming little accomplishment, that could be of no earthly use to me in after-life ; and yet, whatever is amusing and agreeable, is to a certain degree useful, only young ladies don't exactly delight their friends, and contribute to the well-being of society, by dancing Boleros and Cracoviennes *en costume* ; however, without doing either the one or the other, they are not, even in these enlightened days, educated *pro aris et focis*.

It being now two o'clock, our dinner was announced, and Angelot dined with us by Mademoiselle's invitation, that after dinner I might have one more lesson in the Cracovienne, which indeed was exercise enough ; but, as I wished to look for Mr. Waltham's fifty pound note, Mademoiselle kindly took us to the ramparts, where I had a great many fruitless runs after every bit of paper or flake of goose-down that chanced to be giving themselves the benefit of a little air at the time.

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